Commentary

Volume Seventy-seven, Number Three, March 1984

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BOOKS:

Maurice Cranston
on Gertrude Himmelfarb

Steven L. Spiegel
Edward Jay Epstein
Werner J. Dannhauser
Robert Nisbet

Cynthia Ozick, Jewish Writer

Joseph Epstein

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Commentary

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To Our Readers:

Last October, without any advance warning, the plant at which Commentary had been printed for many years closed down, and we were forced to move to another plant virtually overnight. Because this move had to be made without adequate preparation, many unanticipated production problems developed, which were compounded by difficulties with the Post Office. The results were late arrival of the issues printed in the new plant and various defects in the physical condition of these issues (which, to the dismay of many long-time subscribers, also arrived, when they finally did, without the familiar wrapper).

We have now moved to yet another printing plant which is better equipped to handle Commentary, and we trust that, beginning with this issue, the magazine will arrive every month in good time, in good condition, and protected once again by a wrapper. —Ed.

Letters from Readers

The State of World Jewry

To the Editor of Commentary:

Norman Podhoretz's "The State of World Jewry" [December 1983] is a militant but, I think, judicious assessment of the attitude of different sections of world Jewry to Israel. Yet his references to the Israeli scene call for one or two comments.

Mr. Podhoretz attributes the mass protest against the Israeli government in connection with the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila camps to the hatred of Menachem Begin and the attempt of the opposition to topple Begin and his regime. He may be right that those who organized the rally had such an objective in mind. But how do we explain the fact that the mass meeting on Yom Kippur eve, when people in Israel are usually tied to their homes, drew twice as many protesters, some 400,000, than the best organized events of this kind ever did previously? What brought the additional 200,000 people to Tel Aviv and what prompted many of us who are not usually active in politics to become involved in this affair in one way or another?

It was not an attempt to topple Begin's government but rather to break his obstinate refusal to appoint a judicial commission to find out who was responsible for the neglect that permitted the massacre to have taken place. Nobody suspected that the Israeli army had committed the slaughter in the camps, but it was held indirectly responsible for what transpired, since it had been sent into Beirut to prevent the disruption of law and order. That such responsibility indeed rested with those in charge was exactly the finding of the Kahan commission which Begin, under the pressure of public opinion, was ultimately compelled to appoint. It is, I think, a glaring omission in Mr. Podhoretz's essay not to have mentioned the Kahan commission. I do not suspect him of siding with General Sharon, who, having been found responsible by the commission, permitted himself to decry it under the cover of high-sounding patriotism by maintaining that the commission's findings provided Israel's enemies with ammunition. Sharon remains unconcerned with the fact that by attacking the commission, which carried the authority of the highest juridical institution, he undermined one of the country's essential foundations. Mr. Podhoretz appeals to the Israeli opposition to refrain from criticizing the government in a way that would assist Israel's adversaries in their effort to "delegitimize" it. This is a reasonable request and well taken. But the restraint has its limits. It cannot mean the obstruction of justice and juridical procedures, for this would mean undercutting the country's moral fiber from within, which is an even greater danger than the attempt to delegitimize it from without.

Jacob Katz

Jerusalem, Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his spirited survey of "The State of World Jewry" Norman Podhoretz repeatedly and approvingly refers to Emil Fackenheim's notion about a "614th commandment," mandating us to survive, and to Fackenheim's warning not to hand Hitler a posthumous victory. Mr. Podhoretz, as does Fackenheim himself, finds in both the commandment and the warning a mandate for unconditional Jewish support of the state of Israel, regardless of the policies pur-

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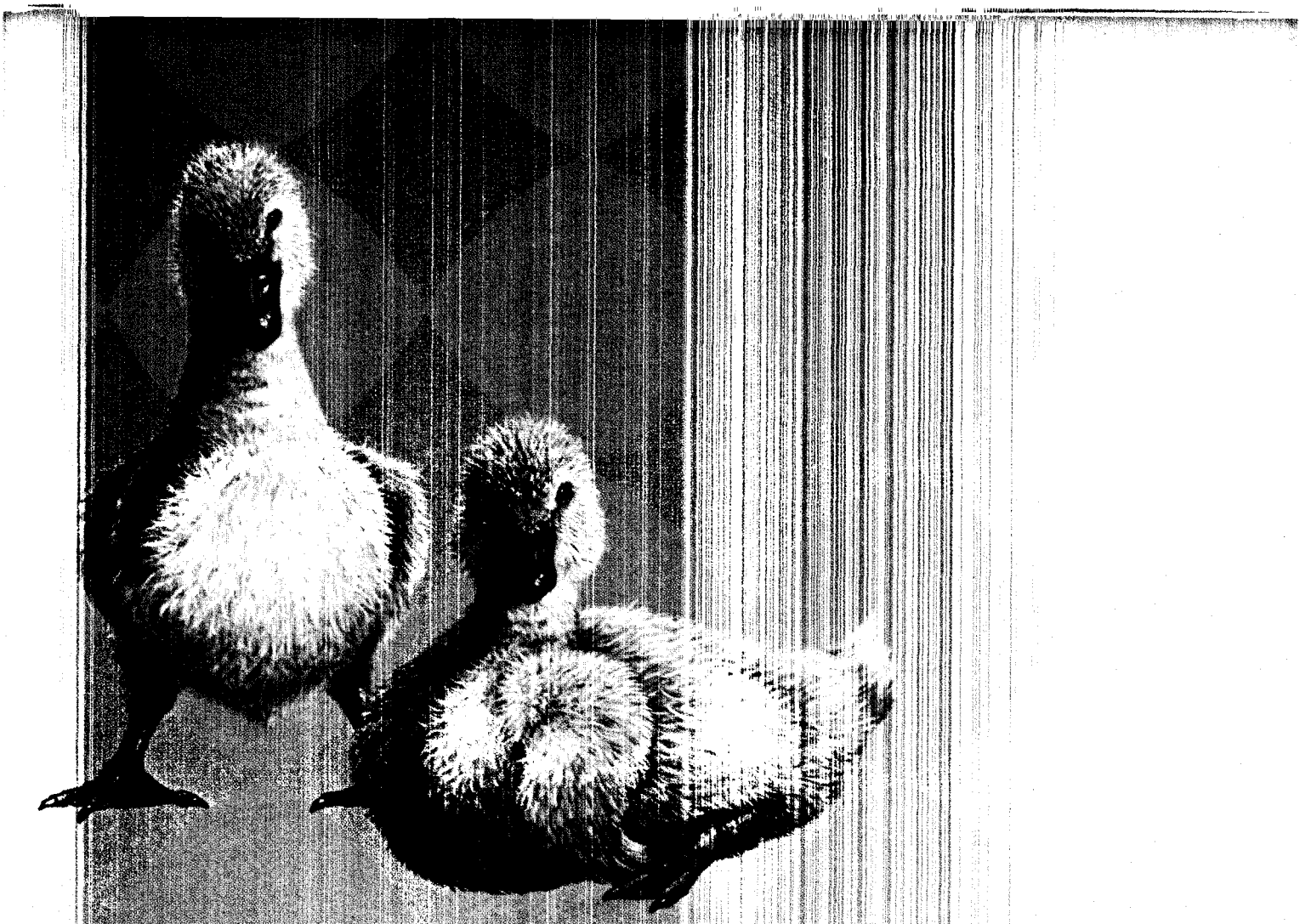

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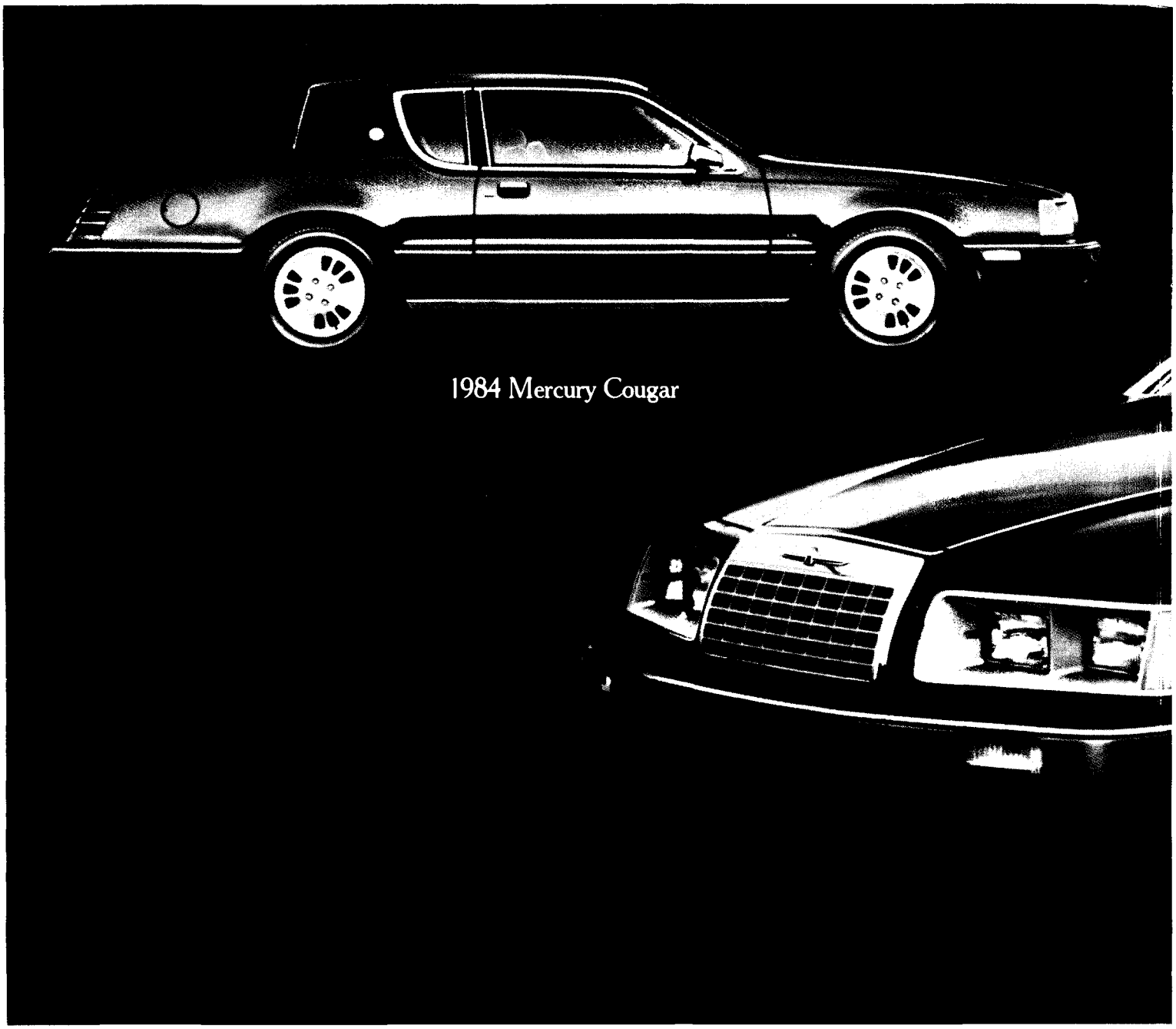

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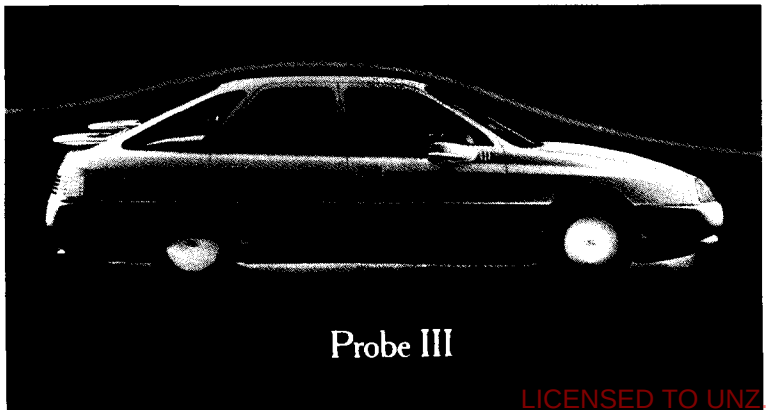

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sued by that state, and regardless of the ideological position of the various Jews to whom that appeal is made.

Whatever one's evaluation might be of the role which the state of Israel plays, or should play, in Jewish life, Jews should think twice before invoking Fackenheim's categories as a warrant for the support they give, and want others to give, to the state of Israel. Those categories, after all, not only provide a warrant for the position championed by Fackenheim and Mr. Podhoretz, but, with equal logical validity, they also lend themselves to the following elaborations:

1. Hitler negated the achievements of the emancipation by considering the Jews to be a "foreign nation" among their German "host people." Any Jew, therefore, who considers emancipation to have been an illusion, and who looks upon Jews who are citizens of a Western country as a "foreign nation" living among a "host people," is handing Hitler a posthumous victory.

2. It was Hitler's aim to make not only Germany but all of Europe *judenrein* (free of Jews). He almost succeeded. Unless, therefore, Jews today make a concerted effort to resettle in Europe, and particularly in Germany, they are handing Hitler a posthumous victory. Certainly, any Zionist attempt to encourage a further Jewish exodus *from* Europe must be seen in this light.

3. Hitler's scale of values assigned priority to "ethnicity" over the teachings of the traditional religions. Any Jew, therefore, who rates "Jewish ethnicity" higher than the religious teachings of Judaism is following Hitler's example, and is handing Hitler a posthumous victory.

4. For Hitler, *Lebensraum*, i.e., extended and secure borders for a Greater Germany, was an overriding consideration in waging war against his neighbors. Any country, therefore, which is guided in its relations with its neighbors by similar considerations is handing Hitler a posthumous victory.

5. Hitler was not satisfied with enrolling the Germans who lived in Germany. He also sought to extend his hegemony even over people living abroad if their ancestors, near or remote, had at one time been known as Germans. The *Verein der Deutschen im Ausland* (Association of Germans Abroad) was charged with keeping that Germanic kin in line. Any modern sovereign state, therefore, which seeks to enroll citizens of a foreign country in its own political apparatus is handing Hitler a posthumous victory.

This list could go on and on. Somewhere down the line we might even mention that Hitler was a vegetarian, and then draw the conclusion that those who today persist in being vegetarians are handing Hitler a posthumous victory. But enough should have been said by now to show that the warning not to hand Hitler a posthumous victory is a rather dubious argument in favor of Zionism and the state of Israel. Indeed, it is not altogether inconceivable that there might be occasions when the 614th commandment and the warning not to hand Hitler a posthumous victory, far from leading to the same course of action, as Fackenheim and Mr. Podhoretz seem to assume, actually come into acute collision.

What, for example, happens when we first identify "Jewish survival" with the "survival of the state of Israel," and then discover that Israeli *raison d'état* demands the adoption of policies which the world at large is more likely to associate with Nazi *Realpolitik* than with that prophetic religion for the sake of which Jews, through the millennia, have made untold sacrifices to survive as Jews? Or what happens if the endeavor not to hand Hitler a posthumous victory on one level compels one to follow Hitler's example on another? Whence do we derive the scale of values which would enable us to make that excruciating choice?

One can obviously make a case for the support of the state of Israel by Jews—yes, even by Jews who regard the creation of that state as a historical necessity in 1948 without giving up their conviction that the *philosophy* of Zionism marks a "regression to tribalism." One can make such a case on all kinds of grounds, *without* invoking Fackenheim's commandment and warning. Those were catchy rhetorical devices when Fackenheim first used them. But by

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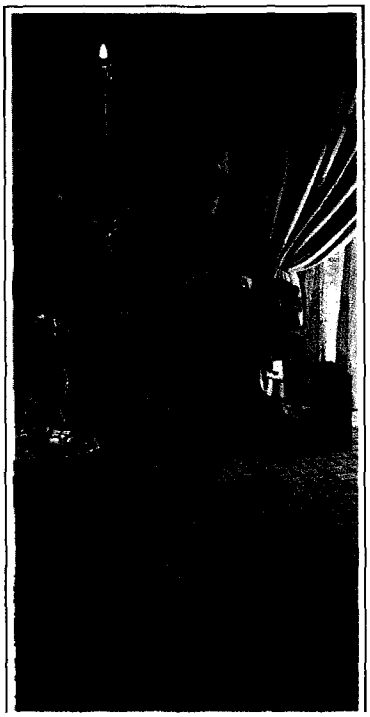

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now they are worn rather thin. Besides, as I have tried to show here, they might "prove" just a little more than Fackenheim and Mr. Podhoretz would like them to prove.

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI
Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The State of World Jewry" makes one serious error in perception and I believe a serious error in judgment follows from it. In spite of a bow to differences, Norman Podhoretz essentially lumps together all critics of any aspect of Israeli policy in Lebanon. The support of over 85 percent of the Jewish people for Israel *was* unshaken, but the criticisms were much broader. The same national surveys which demonstrate over 90 percent support for Israel among America's Jews also show a majority which is critical of certain aspects of Israeli policy and believes in the public expression of differences. Most Jewish critics were not closet anti-Zionists or engaging in the obscenities of an Anthony Lewis or a Noam Chomsky. They included people planning to make *aliyah*, folks who would march against cuts in foreign aid to Israel, and contributors of the larger amounts raised by UJA.

Now one may believe that, despite any differences among them, critics of Israel endanger Israel. (I do not presume to know who future historians will conclude were today's Pharisees or Sadducees.) Therefore, Mr. Podhoretz does well to warn critics that if they are free to attack Israel, he and others are free to attack them. But when and how one attacks are matters of judgment, not just right. Loyal critics of Israel should take seriously the warning that by criticizing they may be violating the commandment of Auschwitz. Therefore, criticism should be made only with fear and trembling, when it appears imperative, when honest judgment suggests it may be helpful, in ways which try to minimize dangers to the Jewish identity of others and the security of Israel.

But what of the judgment of Mr. Podhoretz and his allies? When they exercise their right to attack with such a broad brush, are they not violating the 614th commandment? Jews are a small, endangered species. Dare we write off as disloyal (jackals) the many who express doubts about some aspect of Israeli policy? Would we not do better, as Mr. Podhoretz began to do in "J'Accuse" [COMMENTARY, September 1982], to separate the anti-Semitic and self-hating from the mass of good Jews who, rightly or wrongly, express disagreement with some aspect of Israeli policy?

Our tent must be large enough to encompass as many Jews as possible; define them as jackals, drive them off rather than respond to their arguments, and you contribute to a posthumous victory for Hitler.

DONALD LEE
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The State of World Jewry," Norman Podhoretz urges Israeli opponents of the present Israeli government to be more restrained in voicing their opposition. One has to admire his *chutzpah*. Generally, pro-Likud American Jews content themselves with attacking the legitimacy of Diaspora dissent; Mr. Podhoretz presumes to instruct Israeli dissenters in their political manners.

Mr. Podhoretz's *chutzpah* is all the more striking in that Israeli dissenters have been models of restraint in comparison with the Likud government and its supporters who have branded as "traitor" anyone who dares criticize government policy. Government supporters have organized thugs to disrupt opposition rallies and demonstrations. Government supporters have hailed Begin and Sharon as "Begin, king of Israel" and "Sharon, king of Israel," and it is not reported that either Begin or Sharon recoiled from this appellation. Finally, the murder of Peace Now activist Emil Grunzweig—the first political murder of Jew by Jew since the founding of the state—was committed, one must assume, by supporters of the government. If Mr. Podhoretz would like to increase the civility of Israeli political discourse, let him speak to the Likud government and its supporters.

Mr. Podhoretz is also wrong in suggesting that dissent from Likud policies, whether by Israelis or by Diaspora Jews, somehow harms Israel's cause. Most of the world will be antagonistic to Israel regardless of what anyone says or does. However, there are some people in the West who are not automatic opponents of Israel, just as

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they are not automatic supporters. These people can be influenced—not by crude propaganda, but by deeds. Nothing has so harmed Israel's standing among this group recently as the invasion of Lebanon. Nothing has done so much to repair the damage as the Peace Now demonstrations.

Of course, the invasion of Lebanon has had worse effects than to lower Israel's standing in world public opinion. It has led to the deaths of more than 500 Israelis, more than 250 Americans, and thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians. It has spurred the Soviet Union to provide Syria with new weapons systems that are more dangerous to Israel than ten PLO's. By bringing American troops to Beirut, it has created the danger of a backlash against Israel in American politics. All this could have been avoided had the Israeli government listened to opponents of the war, both in the Diaspora and domestically. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz . . . asks whether critics of the Israeli government will "accept responsibility for spreading the notion that Israel is 'what's wrong' with the Middle East." I ask him whether, as one who has refused to criticize, he will accept responsibility for the disasters of Lebanon.

MARK S. STEIN

Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article contains certain statements that should not go unchallenged. I refer specifically to his argument that, since anti-Zionists, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are using Begin's policies as a justification for their antagonism, criticisms of Begin's policies are therefore made by those whose commitment to the preservation of the state of Israel is "conditional." . . .

But opposition to Menachem Begin is, as Mr. Podhoretz himself recognizes, of long standing within the Zionist movement. I have been (and still remain) a Labor Zionist for over five decades, and I can testify to my own and many of my peers' opposition to Begin's policies before and during his administration. Such opposition is grounded in an attempt to define just what type of state Israel is going to become, and is certainly not directed against the existence of that state. To argue that opposition to Begin serves only to feed those who want to eliminate the state of Israel is similar to the argument that the chicanery of Watergate should not have been the subject of congressional examination because such exposure served the ends of anti-American groups. After all, such partisanship is the essence of a democratic framework (or would Mr. Podhoretz prefer to call it "liberal"?). . . .

We certainly do not want theocratic control over the state, as is becoming more and more evident since Begin assumed his post. We have always noted that the correct translation of Herzl's seminal work is not "The Jewish State," but rather "The State of Jews"; if Herzl had wanted a "Jewish" state, in the sense of one that followed Halakhah, he would have called his tract *Jüdische Staat*, not *Judenstaat*. This means that any Jew, pious or anarchist, has been able to enter Israel without reference to his obedience to Halakhah. We feel that Begin has compromised this freedom. . . .

Once the PLO and especially Arafat had been eliminated, the Labor Zionists felt (and still feel) that the occupation of Lebanon on the northern borders should be entrusted to the Lebanese. . . . The withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon is a principle consonant with *haganah* (defense).

The logical extension of Begin's policies is to be seen in the proposed "annexation" of the West Bank, which he prefers to call Judea and Samaria, with all of its demographic problems. Unless one adopts Meir Kahane's perspective and calls for "expelling" all Arabs from the area, the problems of such an "annexation" could be disastrous to Israel's survival, even as a "State of Jews." Begin himself does not go so far as Kahane, but the problem still exists. The Labor Zionists have therefore suggested that a Palestinian entity, exclusive of the PLO, be established in that area, with the cooperation of Jordan.

Enough has been said to indicate that opposition to many of Begin's policies is not consonant with an anti-Zionist stance. One can oppose those policies for many reasons; it is name-calling, however, to attribute a common identity to opposition *per se*.

IRVING LEVITAS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was disappointing to find Norman Podhoretz amalgamating Orthodox anti-Zionism with Reform and socialist anti-Zionism in his otherwise excellent article. Few Jews—Orthodox or otherwise—would take issue with Mr. Podhoretz for excoriating the Neturei Karta for its anti-Zionist activities, or even with his characterization of the group as a Karaitic sect in-the-making. However, for Mr. Podhoretz to imply that before 1948 the Neturei Karta's brand of anti-Zionism paralleled, for example, Agudat Israel's anti-Zionism, is to misinterpret the ideological character of Orthodox Jewry's differences with the Zionist ideal. Furthermore, to suggest that after 1948, or 1967, Orthodox anti-Zionism disappeared or was repressed because of the manifest success of the Zionist experiment is to misrepresent the historical significance of Orthodoxy's objections to the Zionist movement. Finally, to imply that Orthodox anti-Zionism reappeared in the aftermath of Operation Peace for Galilee is patently false.

Unlike Reform and socialist anti-Zionists, Orthodox anti-Zionists (the Neturei Karta excepted) refused to join the Zionist movement because they believed that its leaders were at heart "socialists who were not afraid of seasickness." They felt that the socialist-Zionist commitment to Jewish statehood, and more importantly from their point of view, to the Jewish people, was conditioned upon altering the fabric of Judaism to make it conform to socialist values. Since history had already decided that Jewish survival depended upon the acceptance of the religious authority of the Talmud, they refused to participate in an organization that was committed to "extra-talmudic" values. In other words, Orthodox anti-Zionists objected to the anti-religious élan that informed the pre-state and early post-state Zionist movement. That this élan existed is best attested to by the resistance on the part of the socialist Zionists to the demand that the name of God be included in the Jewish state's—the *Jewish* state's—Declaration of Independence.

In 1948, with the establishment of the state of Israel, the Orthodox anti-Zionists did not alter their attitude toward Zionism. Instead, they formed a political party to protect their parochial interests and entered the Knesset as members of the opposition. Even in 1967, when all of Israel's major po-

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litical parties joined together in a government of national unity, Agudat Israel, the political party of the majority of the Orthodox anti-Zionists, remained in the opposition. Whatever this may say about the political wisdom of Agudat Israel, it certainly proves its steadfast determination not to join a Jewish government whose commitment to Jewish values was highly suspect. Thus, while the remnant of Reform and socialist anti-Zionism was being "rudely thrown into the dust-bin of history," Orthodox anti-Zionism maintained a consistent and uncompromising position.

And then came the election of 1977. Suddenly the Zionist movement was wrenched free from the control of the "conditional Zionists" and political leadership of the Zionist state was turned over to Menachem Begin and the Revisionists. For many Reform, socialist, and other Jews who had grudgingly and not-so-grudgingly supported Israel in the past, the new political reality in Israel became an occasion for rethinking their commitment to Zionism. At precisely the same time, the Orthodox anti-Zionists left the opposition and joined the government. Although the Orthodox did not repudiate their anti-Zionism—they hold this in abeyance in case the "conditional Zionists" return to office—the election of 1977 marked a turning point in the relationship between Orthodox Judaism and the state of Israel.

What had been slowly evolving since 1977 emerged full-blown in the summer and early fall of 1982. When Prime Minister Begin initially refused to establish an inquiry commission to look into the Sabra and Shatila massacre, Agudat Israel, alone among his coalition partners, never wavered from supporting him in this decision. In fact, Agudat Israel's Council of Torah Scholars rendered a halakhic opinion that establishing a commission of inquiry would be a violation of Jewish law. Furthermore, when the Prime Minister characterized as a blood libel the anti-Israel hysteria which gripped the world during those trying days, Orthodox Jewry, alone among world Jewry, vigorously echoed the charge. . . .

Let us recall that many of Begin's most ardent ideological comrades within his Herut party abandoned him on this issue, leaving the Prime Minister alone with his "anti-Zionist" Orthodox supporters. In the aftermath of the Lebanon war it became clear that Orthodox Jewry—Zionist or otherwise—was among the most prominent supporters of Israel's rights. When confronted by overwhelming external pressures, Orthodox Jews, Zionist and anti-Zionist alike, put aside their ideological differences and led the defense of Israel. Apparently, when it comes to confronting the world, Orthodox Jews have an advantage over others; they seem not to be as plagued by insidious inner doubts.

To repeat, Norman Podhoretz is right for excoriating the Neturai Karta and for consigning the group to historical obloquy. However, by merging the Neturei Karta with other forms of Orthodox anti-Zionism and then lumping both with Reform and socialist anti-Zionism, he has misrepresented the real nature of Orthodoxy's dispute with secular Zionism. As is abundantly clear from his article, Reform and socialist anti-Zionism spring from the fear that Zionism would somehow subvert their efforts to assimilate into the larger society. For this reason these forms of anti-Zionism were resurrected by the election of Menachem Begin and more precisely by the world's reaction to Operation Peace for Galilee. Conversely, Orthodox anti-Zionism, which stems from the exact opposite impulse, responded in a polar opposite fashion to the very same stimuli. By carelessly linking the three types of anti-Zionism, Norman Podhoretz has accomplished for the Reformers and the socialists what they could never have achieved on their own; he has extended to them the legitimacy of the Orthodox, who are after all the keepers of our sacred traditions.

A. BERKOWITZ

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though I have been a reader of COMMENTARY for many years, this is my first letter to the editor. I write . . . in appreciation of the eloquence of Norman Podhoretz's words and the brilliance of his ideas. I write also in the hope that Mr. Podhoretz will clarify some of the issues raised by his remarks.

I think the crux of the matter may be summed up in this question: to what extent should world Jewry be defined in terms of its relationship to the state of Israel? . . . By focusing attention on the role of Israel to the degree that he does, it appears that Mr. Podhoretz fails to appreciate other factors that should be considered in a meaningful discussion of the state of world Jewry, factors that might produce conclusions on certain issues different from the ones he suggests.

It seems to me that in a great many instances the Jew (in America at least) sees himself as part of the greater entity of world Jewry first and foremost as a function of his distinct religious viewpoint and tradition. As a consequence of this allegiance to the religion of the Jewish people (the exact meaning of which may vary with each individual), the individual Jew feels a duty to support the state of Israel.

This sense of duty to support, at least in theory, the state of Israel does not necessarily have to be of a religious nature. It is an obligation, however, that can arise only in a mind that presupposes some form of Jewish religious thought and therefore some common religious bond with fellow Jews. A perfect atheist, it seems to me, cannot really be a true Zionist. If my understanding is correct, then to address the state of world Jewry we must first of all address the religious condition of world Jewry. A discussion from this perspective does not lead so quickly and directly to an almost exclusive focus on Israel.

It is interesting to note that while the sense of duty to support the state of Israel need not necessarily be of a religious nature, in purely practical terms it is indeed most readily apparent among religious American Jews. That is, if statistics support my impression, they would show that of those American Jews who embark on *aliyah* Orthodox Jews are overrepresented. Conversely, of those Israeli Jews who choose to leave Israel, nonreligious Jews are greatly overrepresented. . . .

Stated in other words, the history of future generations will show that the underlying force of one's identification as a Jew in 1983 begins with and consists in large part of an identification with religious values. I think it not unreasonable to conjecture that the very nature of the future state of Israel will be molded in large part by specifically religious values. . . .

Two final questions.

Mr. Podhoretz says that a Jew who keeps the 614th commandment but not the other 613 is a better Jew than one who does the reverse. Does he mean this literally?

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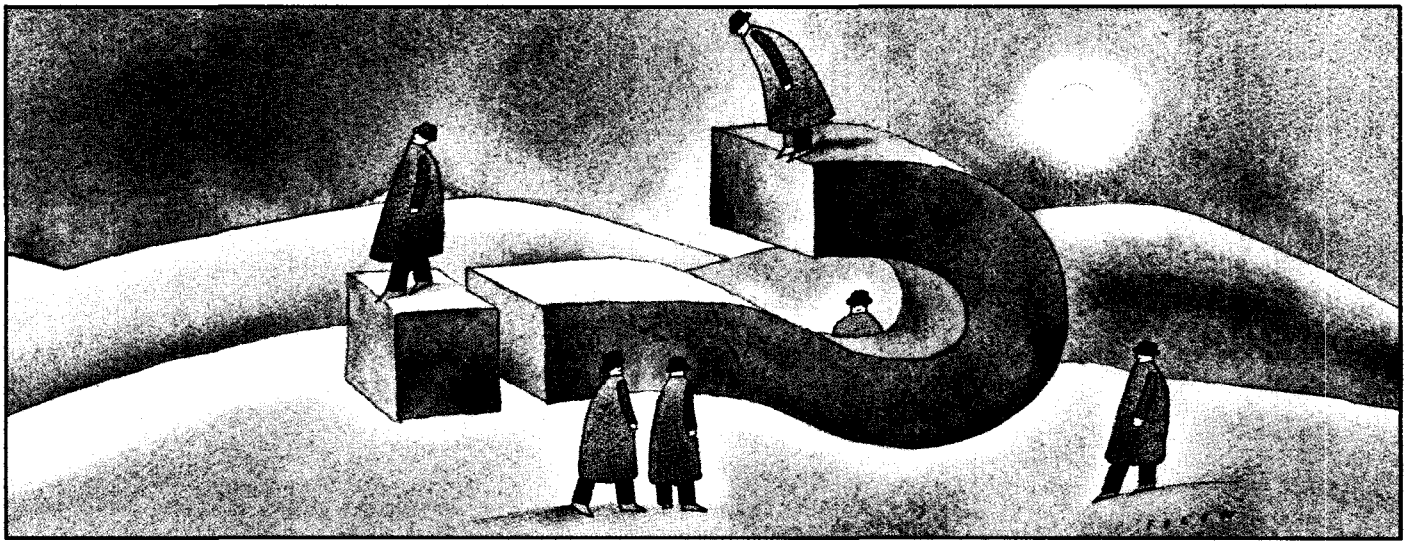

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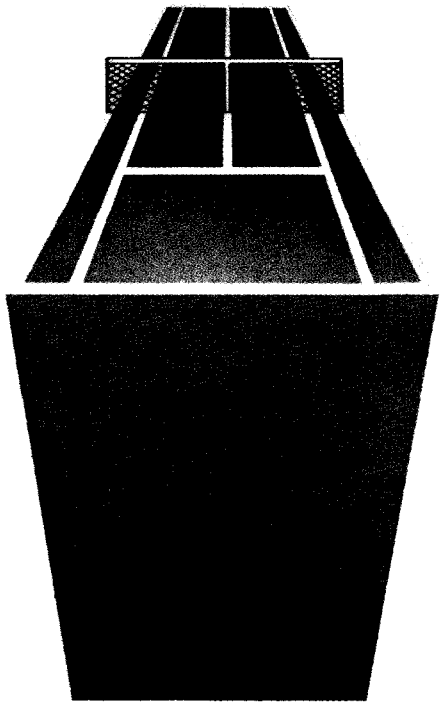

The actual volume of high-level radioactive waste from nuclear power plants is small. The volume taken up by all the used uranium fuel produced to date by America's 80 commercial nuclear reactors is the same as the volume of a single tennis court about 45 feet deep.

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The gist of Mr. Podhoretz's words seem to make light of the severity and danger . . . of intermarriage. Have I represented his viewpoint inaccurately? . . .

BRIAN LADDS

Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If one can conclude anything from Norman Podhoretz's "The State of World Jewry" it is that the state of world Jewry is the state of Israel. He has in fact clearly pointed out that the founding of the state of Israel has divided world Jewry into those who act (in Israel) and those who react (in the Diaspora). In Jewish terms, therefore, those Jews who wish truly to take part in the progress of their people would do well to relocate themselves to where Judaism is the primary force in the development of society. Conversely, those Jews who cannot commit themselves to this mainstream of vibrant action run the risk of being labeled by history as reactionary, i.e., unable to act, but only to react.

Emil Fackenheim, the man who identified the 614th commandment, the commandment of Auschwitz, "There shall be Jews," has also, by his actions more than all the words he has written, exemplified the above division of world Jewry. He has realized that the commandment "There shall be Jews" cannot be observed in Toronto, but only in Jerusalem; that while the state of Israel is in existence those who preach from the podiums of Toronto (or the 92nd Street "Y") can only preach reactions and not action. As a keen student, if not a worshiper of history, Emil Fackenheim has declared with his life his unwillingness to allow the mainstream of vibrant Jewish action that is the state of Israel to pass him by. Can Norman Podhoretz, or for that matter any Jewish leader in the Diaspora, make a similar claim?

HOWARD WARTER

Brookline, Massachusetts
(soon Beersheva, Israel)

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would not quarrel with Norman Podhoretz on the state and existence of world Jewry—his comments were, as usual, stimulating to me, a politically Left-of-Center thinker. (I am a leftist because I support a constitutional right to work for a union wage, environmental protection, and government responsibility for the general welfare, although I also insist on a predominantly free-enterprise approach to economic operations.)

But I find three faults in Mr. Podhoretz's presentation.

1. I object to his linking the war in Vietnam with the wars Israel has fought. It may be that Russian dissidents, suffering a tyranny we pray American intellectuals may never know, make a connection between the USSR's actions in Vietnam and its actions in Syria, but this is vastly different from connecting America's role in Vietnam to Israel's role in Lebanon.

2. Mr. Podhoretz should not accuse the Left of pacifism—the American Revolution fired the shot heard 'round the world, not the whimper. In Lebanon, Israel fought the PLO for reasons of national defense as well as valid reasons to reduce terrorism. Leftists who opposed Israel were motivated (as Mr. Podhoretz has previously pointed out) partly by anti-Semitism, partly by romanticism, and mostly by ignorance of what it takes to establish civilization in our times: hard work, tolerance, education, an army, courage, and luck.

3. Any reference to a Nazi dictator (whose followers murdered millions of Jewish children and their parents) in connection with Jewish aims and aspirations, I find distasteful. Jews have an obligation to all the world's peoples, including themselves, to fight for survival, for freedom and decency. Jews have never been hesitant to adopt decencies invented by Gentiles; nor have they been reluctant to give others their own genius in science, morality, and religion. The tradition of the Jewish people has included suffering, as has that of all peoples; I honor and remember those who suffered. The people who caused suffering deserve no more recognition than is given to the unknown agents which cause cancer. They deserve to be recognized so that they may be destroyed. Afterward, the next disease and current criminal are fought.

JOHN GELLES

Ventura, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his essay, "The State of World Jewry," Norman Podhoretz observes that it is well over a year since the press and TV coverage of the Israeli incursion into Lebanon offended Israeli and American Jews alike by the presentation of Israeli military operations as singularly savage while minimizing the provocations of the enemy and his own far more destructive internecine strife. Many other Jews and many well-meaning Gentiles, influenced by these reports, became highly critical of Zion, Israel, and, too often, Jews.

When confronted by the accusations of bias in reporting, representatives of the media explained that Israeli behavior is covered more thoroughly than other events in the Middle East because most Americans are far more interested in Israel than in its neighbors, in their domestic or inter-Arab affairs. That would seem to be true, but when that interest implies that Jews are to be held to standards of behavior that—to them—seem to threaten their survival, then the interest becomes no longer friendly. This conflict between the media and the Jewish community has not yet been resolved. Nor do Jews understand why so many others of their friends and supporters seem to have turned against them. Criticism of the wisdom of Israeli policy is acceptable and if constructive even welcome, but biased reporting cannot be construed as friendly.

I should like to suggest a reason for the concentration of interest and even the bias in reporting, based upon observations made during therapeutic sessions by my colleagues and myself (I write as a practicing psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and visiting professor of pastoral psychiatry at the Jewish Theological Seminary). Jews have enjoyed the favor of many or most of their well-intentioned neighbors at least since the Holocaust, and since its inception the Jewish state has had their sympathy and support. Looked at more closely, this favor derived from an identification of liberal and well-meaning people with the Jews and Israel. The reasons for this coincidence of interest may include sympathy for the underdog, guilt for having failed to protect, a sharing of cultural or intellectual concerns, or admiration for the phoenix-like defiance of death followed by resurrection. But what is of interest in this context is that for many individuals, Jews represent restraint, control of aggressive impulses, and often passivity to the point of being victimized. Sympathy and empathy for Jews on the part of some of these people are encouraged by the need to reinforce their own self-control.

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When Israel exercises the same vigor in protecting its perimeter that other nations do, it sheds the image of passivity and vulnerability and thereby loses its appropriateness as an object of identification for those whose psychic economy profits from identification with a victim. The former friends of Israel not only lose interest in it but indignantly turn against it for letting them down by abandoning restraint and passivity. This rejection is encountered both among those Jews who hesitate to see themselves as other than victims and among the Gentile sympathizers whom I have been describing.

If Israel and the Jews are to encourage support on the basis of a past history of persecution, they must be prepared to lose it when they shed the image of a victim. Fraternity and tolerance will have to be based on broader foundations of communal cohesion, on the perception of a genuine community of interest, and on unconditional mutual affection and respect.

MORTIMER OSTOW
Riverdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

May I add a footnote to Norman Podhoretz's excellent observations on the impact of the events of 1948 and 1973 on the Orthodox, Reform, and socialist forms of Jewish anti-Zionism?

In 1948 and 1967, respectively, the Israeli Chief Rabbinate joined in establishing two new Jewish holidays: Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel Independence Day) and Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem [Unification] Day). Both appear on the Chief Rabbinate's liturgical calendar, are included in the Israel Defense Force prayer book, and are observed by many Jews around the world as religious and/or national holidays.

However, it was not until 1975 that the Reform movement adopted Yom HaAtzmaut as a religious holiday; it has yet to recognize Yom Yerushalayim. . . .

JOEL B. WOLOWELSKY
Yeshivah of Flatbush
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The State of World Jewry" makes extraordinarily good sense. . . . Increased anti-Zionism on the part of the American Jewish community was the result of the United Nations 1975 Zionism/racism resolution. Many "establishment" Jews, whose cautious support for Israel did not derive from Zionism, became more openly anti-Zionist as the term itself brought forth disapprobation in the general community. At that time the Zionist organizations in the United States commenced a campaign which suggested that rather than being a form of racism, Zionism was a "badge of honor" to be borne proudly in a world opposed to Jewish nationalism. But Jews were slow to recognize that anti-Zionism was a new slogan for anti-Semitism and thus continued to view Zionism as a negative term, a dirty word (and many still do).

Although I agree with Mr. Podhoretz that Jews ultimately passed the test, continuing their support for Israel during and after Operation Peace for Galilee, their "failure of nerve" might surface again as Jews get caught up in leftist peace movements which are not only overtly anti-Israel but anti-American as well.

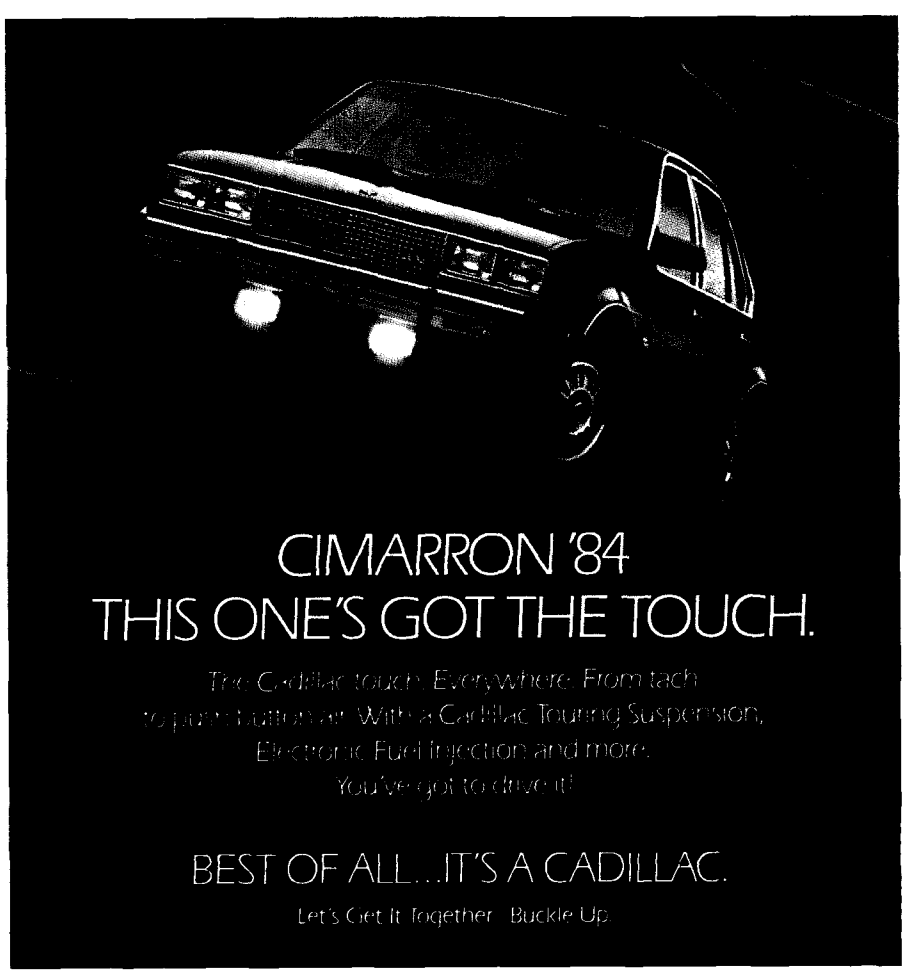
I believe that Jews, whose tradition has been on the whole somewhat pacifist, must clearly be made to see the difference between striving for peace as particularists (Jews) and contending within the universalist tradition whose tendency has been to disallow the struggle of Jews *qua* Jews. . . . If . . . that particular struggle is lost, then the "failure of nerve" could well spread in the community of Jews, diminishing support for Israel.

LUCIE RAMSEY
Mill Valley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz sent sympathetic vibrations through my Christian conscience. I feel as though his experience were mine. For the betrayal (if I might use the word) that he describes within his own community is similar to, if not the same as, what I perceive within mine.

The Christian dissent from moral support for our country, and for what might have been learned from World War II, is reflected in a recent seminar on "Understanding Russia" held in the Washington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National Cathedral. One speaker at the seminar stated: "In a nuclear age, we cannot afford to do anything else but live in peace with the Soviet Union." The Soviet representative then added (and his statement was not only unchallenged but later supported): ". . . The Soviets were forced to act belligerently through American aggression."

. . . Granted, our government is often less than clear and consistent in articulating foreign-policy objectives and thereby encourages even illogical dissent. But to remain silent in the face of the suggestion that America is so aggressive as to cause Russian belligerency (considering Hungary, Poland, and Afghanistan) is a serious misreading of 20th-century history. To say peace is preferable to anything else is, as one older Anglican priest put it, to emphasize one commandment over all others. . . .

To hear such opinions expressed . . . in a Christian church today brings renewed poignancy to what Thomas Mann in exile wrote in 1940:

> Civilization felt that it could endure war no longer. . . . And the pacifist attitude and conviction of civilized humanity, so gradually achieved and so dearly paid for [by World War I], were abused and thrown away by men who both despised and exploited natural progress. The love of peace, the honorable aversion to war, now implanted in the nations, was a godsend to them, just as night is welcome to a thief; under its cover they prepared their devastating forays.

Popular philosophy may lead one to value peace above all else, particularly when one is surrounded with material well-being. . . . But our common Judeo-Christian tradition, it seems to me, should alert us to the danger of seeing all values, including materialism, as equal.

Such blindness was reflected by another speaker at the Cathedral:

> The Soviet Union is guided by a philosophy about the relation between the individual and the state that is different from ours. If we concede [the Soviets'] right to their views and their right to order their own affairs at home, we would be removing an important stumbling block to the search to avoid nuclear war.

In other words, man is an island. And the imprisonment of dissenters or genocide in a village of Afghanistan is insignificant.

That there is a Judeo-Christian counterbalance is found in a recent statement . . . made by the French bishops:

> Nonviolence is a risk a person can take. Can states, whose function it is to preserve the peace, take that risk? In our world of violence and injustice, it is the duty of politicians to safeguard the peace of the community for which they are responsible. That community is made of peace, but it is also made of justice, of solidarity, of liberty. To protect it, politicians must have the means of deterring, as far as possible, a potential aggressor.

And, they might have added, as Camus demanded, the aggressor must be named, loud and clear, so that the protector is not called the thief.

In this world of confused opinions among men of good will, it appears to me that Israel, with the moral values it defends, is uniquely important. Israel is not an affluent nation that asserts its right by power. It is an economically and geographically small nation that can survive only by presenting a sound moral position to attract world support. What nation today other than Israel so profoundly and consistently examines its life against values essential to both Christian and Jew? Under these circumstances, to confuse the aggressor with the policeman is to have learned nothing from World War II and to say that the commandment of Auschwitz does not exist.

DOUGLAS H. SCHEWE
Madison, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his interesting article, Norman Podhoretz, focusing on the role of world Jewry, links its present status with the destiny of the state of Israel, which since its establishment in 1948 has been a source of identification and pride for Jews of varying political and religious orientations the world over. Mr. Podhoretz recognizes the rising respect for the Jewish people among Gentiles as a result of Israel's "courageous" determination "to hold firm against overwhelming external pressures and insidious inner doubts," efforts which kept the little nation afloat, though not without its share of "bruises." In a real sense, Mr. Podhoretz provides his readers with a ringing reply to the voices of doubt that, to take one example, issue forth from the pages of *In the Land of Israel*, a recent book by the Israeli novelist Amos Oz. . . .

HENRY REGENSTEINER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's "The State of World Jewry" provides a refreshing shot of adrenalin to a beleaguered soul residing in a university town so aptly described by him. Vocal support of Israel during the Lebanon war in this sort of environment did require a great deal of moral courage that few could muster. And those who did received precious little recognition and support from fellow Jews. On the other hand, there has been a virtual parade of Peace Now and other such opposition speakers in this area.

To avoid being demoralized, I constantly remind myself that what stands for reality in a university town is not reality elsewhere. It is reassuring to learn, for Israel's sake, that the reality, according to Mr. Podhoretz, is so much better.

JANICE S. GOSHKO
Amherst, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Once again, Norman Podhoretz has been able to articulate the observations and concerns of so many American Jews who have been experiencing a sense of stifled outrage at the most publicized responses to Lebanon by both Jews and non-Jews. Mr. Podhoretz gives a voice to the 85 percent of us who have been watching and listening to this sad spectacle and who have recognized what is represented under that high moral tone—participation in the delegitimation of Israel that is a required step prior to its destruction.

The recognition that delegitimation was a necessary prelude to physical obliteration marked a significant turning point in Arab efforts against Israel after 1967. There are always many more willing hands throughout the world for this kind of moral massacre. At the point that delegitimation leads to destruction, however, many of these same people would recoil from the physical results of their labors, but then, without losing a beat, they would extend their compassion to the refugees and survivors.

By reinforcing our recognition that the vast majority of Jews firmly

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share an untortured view of Lebanon, Mr. Podhoretz has helped strengthen those who have felt isolated by media exploitation of a moral carnival. It is not generally recognized just how much courage it takes for a Jew to defend identifiable Jewish interests of any sort. One sees this constantly verified by the aggressiveness which Jews can exhibit when fighting for members of other oppressed groups, while often remaining uncommonly silent in the face of grave attacks on and dangers to their own group.

Since 1967 a perverse ideological climate has been created in which those who take positions that would help preserve the lives of four million Jews against murderous and powerful enemies feel some degree of moral isolation. It is vitally important that there be courageous Jews in the academy, the media, and the religious and political arenas who will not be cowed by appearing in lonely opposition to the high-minded. Mr. Podhoretz has helped immeasurably by clarifying which position requires courage and which position simply cloaks itself in easy virtue.

M. Donald Coleman
Mamaroneck, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

When do we writers consider another writer brilliant? When we find that he has managed to put into words ideas that we would have liked to express, or when we recognize in his writings an "in-advance plagiarism" of thoughts we have not yet put down on paper. For me, Norman Podhoretz has done it again in his illuminating article, "The State of World Jewry." He hits many a nail on the head when he speaks of the "ideological conditionality in the Zionism of the socialist Zionists," of Jews who . . . "no longer had the stomach to defend Israel," of public figures "who . . . never called attention to their Jewish origins [yet who suddenly were] willing to make the ultimate sacrifice of identifying themselves in public as Jews in order to lend greater credibility to their attacks on Israel," and of the "conformity [of academics and journalists] to prevailing opinion," that parades under the heading of dissent.

I would add that the very word dissent is a misnomer when self-applied by American Jewish critics of Israeli policies. What is dissent? The vocal opposition of the citizen of a totalitarian country to the policies of his government, undertaken at great risk of being penalized, jailed, deported, or put into an insane asylum. Sakharov is a dissenter, Shcharansky is a dissenter. The Jew who criticizes Israeli actions in America (or even in Israel) has no reason to fear a gulag. On the contrary, if he is a writer, his chances of placing an article on the op-ed pages of America's leading newspapers are twenty times greater than those of a defender of Israel. In "dissenting" from the actions of Israel's government, he is conforming to the opinions of many of his non-Jewish peers and frequently to the policies of his own, American, government. "Joining the jackals" does not require heroism. The dissenter is lonely; the jackal-joiner finds safety in numbers.

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rael was governed by the Labor party. It was then taken for granted that the mostly non-socialist Jews in the Diaspora would back the government of Israel because it was the government of Israel. Incidentally, the Labor government was by no means beyond reproach. To name but one of its disastrous errors: the unpreparedness for the Yom Kippur War brought Israel close to being wiped out. (Does it speak for or against Menachem Begin that the weight on his conscience of the 500-odd dead in the Lebanon war incapacitated him for carrying on as Prime Minister? No Labor minister felt incapable of carrying on in spite of almost 3,000 dead in the Yom Kippur War.) Yet from the first day of the Begin government, long before the war in Lebanon, many an American Labor Zionist distanced himself from the Israeli government. It was not "his" government. And if someone dared to criticize Breira or similar organizations, he was promptly accused of McCarthyism. It can be safely stated that for many "ancestral" Begin-haters, as Mr. Podhoretz calls them, their hatred of Begin was more important that their love of Israel. "I am ashamed of being a Zionist," said a participant in a meeting of Boston academics. His "anguish" was not caused so much by Israel's misdeeds as by the fact that his Third World "contacts" didn't smile at him anymore. (Did they ever? And what did he have to do to earn their smiles?)

As for those who were willing to make the supreme sacrifice of identifying as Jews, Anthony Lewis went them one better. He does not usually use the editorial "we," nor does he ever use the "we" as a *pluralis majestatis*, but suddenly Lewis, the supposedly detached columnist, used, in the hallowed columns of the New York *Times*, a "we" that meant "we Jews," only to bear down more savagely on the government of Israel. The "we" was his alibi—it meant that he could not possibly be prejudiced against the state of Israel.

Israel's ultra-Left has produced a number of spokesmen with more interest in the cause of the Palestinians than in the survival of Israel. To name but one: last December the New York *Times* published an article by one Amnon Kapeliuk who was described as an Israeli, editor of Israel's (left-fringe) magazine *New Outlook* and Tel Aviv correspondent of *Le Monde*. Not being a masochist, I didn't keep the article. But I recognized the name when I read in a Latin American newspaper that the same Kapeliuk was presented by the PLO representative in Bahia, Brazil, as he promoted his book, *The Massacre of Sabra and Shatila*. One line of the short account of his speech struck me especially: he spoke of "Sadat's treason against the Palestinians."

I do not say, "My country, right or wrong." Nobody should say it after Vietnam. Nor do I confuse Jews or Zionists who underwent honest soul-searching as a result of Israel's (widely misreported) war in Lebanon with those visceral Begin-haters for whom Israel was the cause of the world's ills. I too have been searching my soul—not for self-abasing denigration, but for the silver lining in the cloud that now hovers over Israel.

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz writes that "there is evidence that the idea of stigmatizing Zionism as a form of racism . . . originated not in the Arab world but in the Kremlin." This is a careful statement, bespeaking a commendable caution in an area where few things can be known for certain. (Or until the Andropov Papers are opened?) May I suggest, however, that the evidence is, even so, overwhelming. The proposition first surfaced in a two-part article which appeared in *Pravda* February 18–19, 1971, and was promptly published in an English-language pamphlet by the Novosti Press Agency of Moscow. The author was Vladimir Viktorovich Bolshakov, then (or shortly thereafter) Deputy Secretary of *Pravda*'s editorial board in charge of the newspaper's international department. Bolshakov, a rabid anti-Semite, asserted, among other things, that the massacre at Babi Yar was a collaboration of Zionists with the Nazis. The propaganda campaign thus begun has continued without let-up, and with appalling success in some quarters.

I write of this in some detail in an essay in a forthcoming book, *Loyalties*.

[Senator] DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN
Washington, D.C.

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Does he mean this literally? asks Brian Ladds of my statement about "Jews whose observance of the 613 commandments is likely to be outweighed in the scale of Jewish history by their repudiation of the 614th. . . ." The answer is yes, I do mean it literally. And it is because I do that I think the health of world Jewry in our time is above all else a function of its attitude toward the state of Israel. Mark S. Stein admires nothing about me but my *chutzpah* in presuming "to instruct Israeli dissenters in their political manners," but I fear I will have to deprive myself even of that shred of his admiration by pointing out that there is no *chutzpah* at all in my inclusion of the Jews of Israel in this analysis. As Jews, they too are subject to the 614th commandment. If, in the exercise of their undoubted rights as citizens of a democratic polity, they violate that commandment, they can and should be held to account as Jews.

This is not, as Mr. Stein seems to think, a trivial question of "political manners" or the "civility" of debate; I am all for good manners and civility, but such graces have nothing to do with the 614th commandment. (I am, incidentally, *not* a supporter of Likud, or any other Israeli political party; in my opinion, it is for Israelis, not Americans, to support or oppose one Israeli political party or another. I did, however, support the war in Lebanon at the time and I still support it in retrospect. By destroying the PLO, the Israelis achieved their major objective, and they would have achieved even more if the United States had come to a "strategic understanding" with them at the beginning instead of when it may already have been too late to reconstitute an independent Lebanon.)

Jakob J. Petuchowski is refreshingly frank in admitting that he, an eminent Reform scholar, still regards Zionism as a regression to tribalism. But I have to say that most of his examples of posthumous victories for Hitler strike me as simply silly. What is far from silly, on the other hand, is his question, "What happens if the endeavor not to hand Hitler a posthumous victory on one level compels one to follow Hitler's example on another?" I submit that this question in itself, suggesting as it does that Israel is capable of—what? setting up crematoria as a way of solving the Palestinian problem?—confirms exactly what I was trying to say in

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my article about Jewish anti-Zionism. (On the other side—and *l'havdil*—A. Berkowitz's interesting letter only confirms what I was trying to say about Orthodox anti-Zionism.)

I gather that Donald Lee and some of my other critics would regard a question like Jakob Petuchowski's as falling within the bounds of legitimate dissent. Obviously, I do not. On the other hand, I agree with Jacob Katz that agitating for the formation of a commission of inquiry into Sabra and Shatila did fall within the bounds of legitimate dissent; indeed, I myself called for such a commission in a piece in the Washington *Post*. But Mr. Katz must recognize that this agitation *was* taken by many people all over the world as an admission of Jewish guilt. He clearly thinks that on this issue the benefit to Israel was worth the price. Perhaps. But if even the Kahan commission came at a price —and I believe it was higher than Mr. Katz does—how much more is that the case with declarations by Israeli "dissenters" to the effect that the country is becoming fascist and the like?

As for "dissenters" in the Diaspora, I can only repeat what I said in my article (and what Janice S. Goshko, M. Donald Coleman, and Benno Weiser Varon bear out from their own experience): attacks on Israel today are a species of conformity to the anti-Israel environment in which most Jews live, not a form of dissent. But I have no interest in a sterile contention over the question of who most deserves to be called a dissenter, and I bring it up only because it bears on the much more important question raised in various ways by Donald Lee, Irving Levitas, and Mark S. Stein: what about friendly criticism of Israel? My answer, quite simply, is that anti-Zionism has in recent years become so naked and so brazen in so many centers of opinion that the overriding order of business for any Jew who wants to observe the 614th commandment is to defend Israel against its ideological and political enemies. Indeed, there is so much work to do along these lines nowadays that Jews might well find little time or energy left over for adding to the criticisms with which Israel is so generously supplied by its enemies. Except, of course, for those Jews who believe that Israel's policies—or even only Likud's—are to blame for the fact that the world still regards the existence of a sovereign Jewish state as (to put it delicately) problematical. But Jews who believe this are not only wrong in their diagnosis; they are also violating the 614th commandment.

Famine in the Ukraine

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to congratulate Marco Carynnyk for his excellent article on the cover-up of the forced famine in the Ukraine ("The Famine the *Times* Couldn't Find," COMMENTARY, November 1983).

It might be worth noting, as a footnote to Mr. Carynnyk's article, that when I raised the issue of the forced famine in a debate on self-determination during the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the delegate from the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist

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Republic denounced the "repeated fabrications about an alleged famine which was supposed to have occurred in the Ukrainian SSR fifty years ago." This representative went on to explain that this "slander" had been perpetrated by the "Ukrainian nationalist bourgeois" who came to the United States after the war and circulated lies about the famine in order to justify their presence here. In that connection, he quoted from a California Congressman who had charged that there was famine in the United States.

This is standard fare at the UN, not nearly so interesting as Mr. Carynnyk's account of the cover-up in the West of the mass murder in the Ukraine. It is, however, a fitting commentary on the United Nations that the Ukrainian delegate spoke as the representative of a sovereign and independent state, one that is now, in fact, a member of the Security Council. The status of the Ukraine within the United Nations bears about as much relation to the real status of the enslaved Ukrainian nation as the comments of the Ukrainian delegate on the forced famine bear to the truth.

CARL GERSHMAN
Counselor, Office of the U.S.
Representative to the
United Nations
New York City

Culture Critics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed Joseph Epstein's essay on culture critics ["It's Only Culture," November 1983], but I would like to take exception to his explanation of the problem. If I understand his argument correctly, he contends that the sad condition of artistic criticism, and intellectual life in general, results from widespread education, particularly the rise of the middle classes into the higher reaches of education, where, for the first time, they have been confronted with "cultural and intellectual things." Their anxiety to show a fashionable control of this new knowledge has become a new chapter in the history of status symbolism and has spawned the phony, trivial, and often outlandish "new culture." In Mr. Epstein's scenario, popular culture critics have been feeding and exploiting the status frenzy, while the intellectuals are merely guilty of a crime of omission—abdicating their responsibility to correct popular taste. . . .

This presentation of the causes of our cultural dilemma . . . assumes that expanded education enhances the influence of those receiving instruction more than that of those who design and present the instruction. I don't think a historian like Gibbon would be convinced by such an argument. He noted that the early Roman empire enjoyed a rapid spread of education. Roman culture, however, soon suffered a fate very much like the one that has overtaken contemporary letters: "A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste." Gibbon cites Longinus in blaming the situation on the intellectual community itself, specifically on prejudices and habits of mind that enervated intellectual life. We too would do better to examine the intellectuals' habits of mind than to propose middle-class innocents who inadvertently muck up culture. . . .

What happens when the number of persons trained as academics mushrooms into a large social class and overflows from even our huge educational establishment into general society, in the form of reviewers and culture journalists? Obviously, the anxieties and methods of professional scholarship become intensified. The sheer numbers of people, all trying to gain recognition, within and without academia, and having as their primary tool the annihilation of their subject, assure the rapid revolution of celebrity and taste that characterizes fashion. The hierarchical values of professional scholarship mix rather explosively with the general expectation of success that permeates our democratic society.

Secondly, as the population of potential culture critics grows, there is pressure to expand the boundaries of critical competence ever outward . . . until the notion of artistic culture is indistinguishable from *the* culture. Finally, academia's ni-

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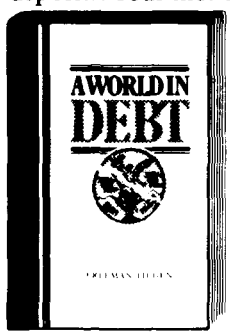

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hilistic methods are freed to touch on any subject. (Marx and Freud have been particularly useful in this enlargement of subject matter, and this fact may contribute as much to their popularity as does their actual content.)

The decline in cultural standards results from the negative effects of an overdeveloped intellectual class (though certainly not from the overdevelopment of its intellects). Rather than abdicating their obligation to knock down everything rubbishy in the realm of culture (as Joseph Epstein charges they have done), intellectuals have been knocking down with a vengeance. The problem for Mr. Epstein is that their definition of rubbish differs from his. While I wish him well in any attempts he makes to reform their tastes, the question raised by the recent gross expansion of the intellectual class is not what shall or shall not be thought rubbish, but what should and what should not be the role of the intellectual class in society.

DOUGLAS LEMASTER
New York City

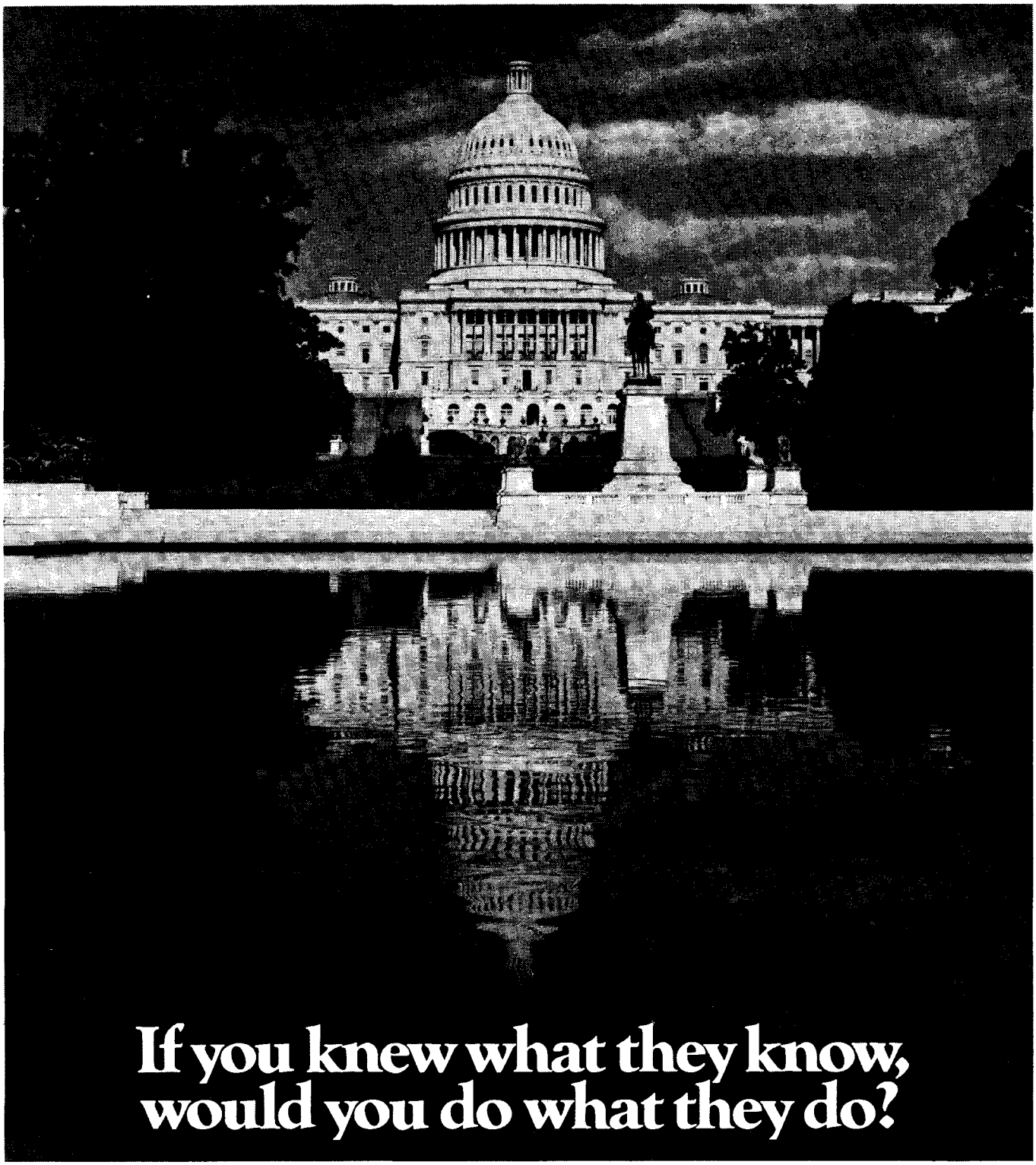
JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

I find very little to disagree with in Douglas LeMaster's very intelligent letter, except to say that I do not think that our current cultural situation results from the widespread education of the middle classes. I think this education was not the cause but one of the conditions responsible for the situation I criticized.

Economists

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of Lester C. Thurow's *Dangerous Currents* [Books in Review, November 1983], A. Lawrence Chickering (presumably in reference to Thurow and himself) concludes: "Both liberals and conservatives are rightly disturbed by the commitment of professional economists to something called 'rational individual utility maximization,' an idea that seems to imply indifference to the content and substance of the good life (what has come to be known as the 'quality of life')." This caricature of the economics profession is perpetuated by those who dabble in economics but essentially demonstrate an ignorance (willful or otherwise) of its substance. At least from the time of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), in which Smith discussed



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the economics of sacrificing wages for a more pleasant job in the context of rational behavior, the economics profession has been concerned with these issues.

It is interesting that although Thurow's book is intended to be a devastating critique of the economics profession, book-review editors in magazines and newspapers have not called on professional economists to write reviews. This results in a perpetuation of the public's ignorance of the strengths and limitations of economic analysis, and serves no useful purpose.

BARRY R. CHISWICK
University of Illinois
Chicago, Illinois

A. LAWRENCE CHICKERING writes:

Barry R. Chiswick's criticism of my "caricature of the economics profession" misses a critical distinction I tried to make between economics and the economists who practice it. Economic analysis itself, as I suggested, certainly can be (and is) used by economists to study how people pursue the good life. It is, however, the fact that many individual economists apply economic analysis from the perspective of a "desiccated rationalism" that creates the concern of which I spoke. That perspective, which is limited to the practitioners and is not implied in their art, nevertheless (unfortunately) turns many people off the art. In the end, I agree with Mr. Chiswick that only economists themselves can counter this "caricature." But to be convincing, they must acknowledge that, for many of their colleagues, no caricature is involved.

The Mysterious Messenger

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with interest the letters of Monty N. Penkower and the other correspondents in the January letters section commenting on "Who Was the 'Mysterious Messenger'?" by Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut [October 1983]. All those involved in discovering the identity of the "mysterious messenger" should be congratulated. In retrospect, however, it does not really matter that much who was the first to find the name of the "mysterious messenger" or whether the discovery of the truth was made on the basis of a misunderstanding or of faulty reasoning. But since Mr. Penkower insists that he was the first to disclose Eduard Schulte's name, in 1983, I ought to correct him. Schulte's name and position (and also my source for this information) were first published in the German translation of my book *The Terrible Secret* (*Was niemand wissen wollte*, Berlin, 1981, p. 102). I do not blame Mr. Penkower for having overlooked this. I had, in fact, forgotten it myself until I was reminded of it by a recent story in the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*.

WALTER LAQUEUR
London, England

The Education Establishment

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The day after the December issue of COMMENTARY arrived, bearing Peter Skerry's review of *The Troubled Crusade* by Diane Ravitch, along came the December issue of the *American School Board Journal*, containing another review of the same volume.

The comparison is instructive. Mr. Skerry faults Mrs. Ravitch for an insufficiently clear "point of view" and for "shy[ing] away from the implications of her own evidence and the logic of her own argument." His principal criticism is that she has pulled her punches.

But in the *American School Board Journal* Jerome Cramer, a staff member of the school-board association, writes that Mrs. Ravitch "takes straight aim at the fuzzy-headed do-gooders who sacrificed academic quality on the altar of hoped-for social progress," terms the book a "glittering lens [that] should throw a shaft of light on the current debate over school quality," urges his readers to "run out and buy a copy," but forewarns them that they "might not agree with all of Mrs. Ravitch's conclusions."

Can this be the same book? Excessively balanced and noncommittal according to Mr. Skerry, but frighteningly outspoken according to Mr. Cramer? Indeed it can, as anyone who has spent much time wading through the broad (if shallow) mainstream of the education profession will understand. What passes for ideas in the profession is a set of impulses and notions so soft that they typically disintegrate whenever one picks them up and examines them. To be an education critic—and none is more insightful, steadfast, or clear-headed than Diane Ravitch—requires a bucket more often than a rapier. Hence what may strike the leathery ideo-

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logical warrior as a cautious, even dispassionate, critique is apt to resound within the field of education like a thunderclap.

The Troubled Crusade is such a work. I suspect Mrs. Ravitch made a conscious decision to write a book that the millions of people who comprise the education profession would be obliged to take seriously, rather than one that could be easily dismissed—by those who most need to read it—as a diatribe, ideological sortie, or political manifesto. Cramer's review in the *American School Board Journal* and many like it now appearing in other journals that "the profession" reads suggest that she made a canny choice. The book is being taken very seriously by those who actually work in and around the field of education policy, and it is making many of them squirm. After all, when there's been as much arrant nonsense and self-evident folly as Mrs. Ravitch found, just setting it out in an honest, factual way is sufficient. The foolishness damns itself, the culprits indict themselves, and the wiser alternatives that ought henceforth to guide us practically formulate themselves. Had Mrs. Ravitch rubbed the profession's noses in what she found, I believe her fine book would have less effect, Mr. Skerry to the contrary notwithstanding.

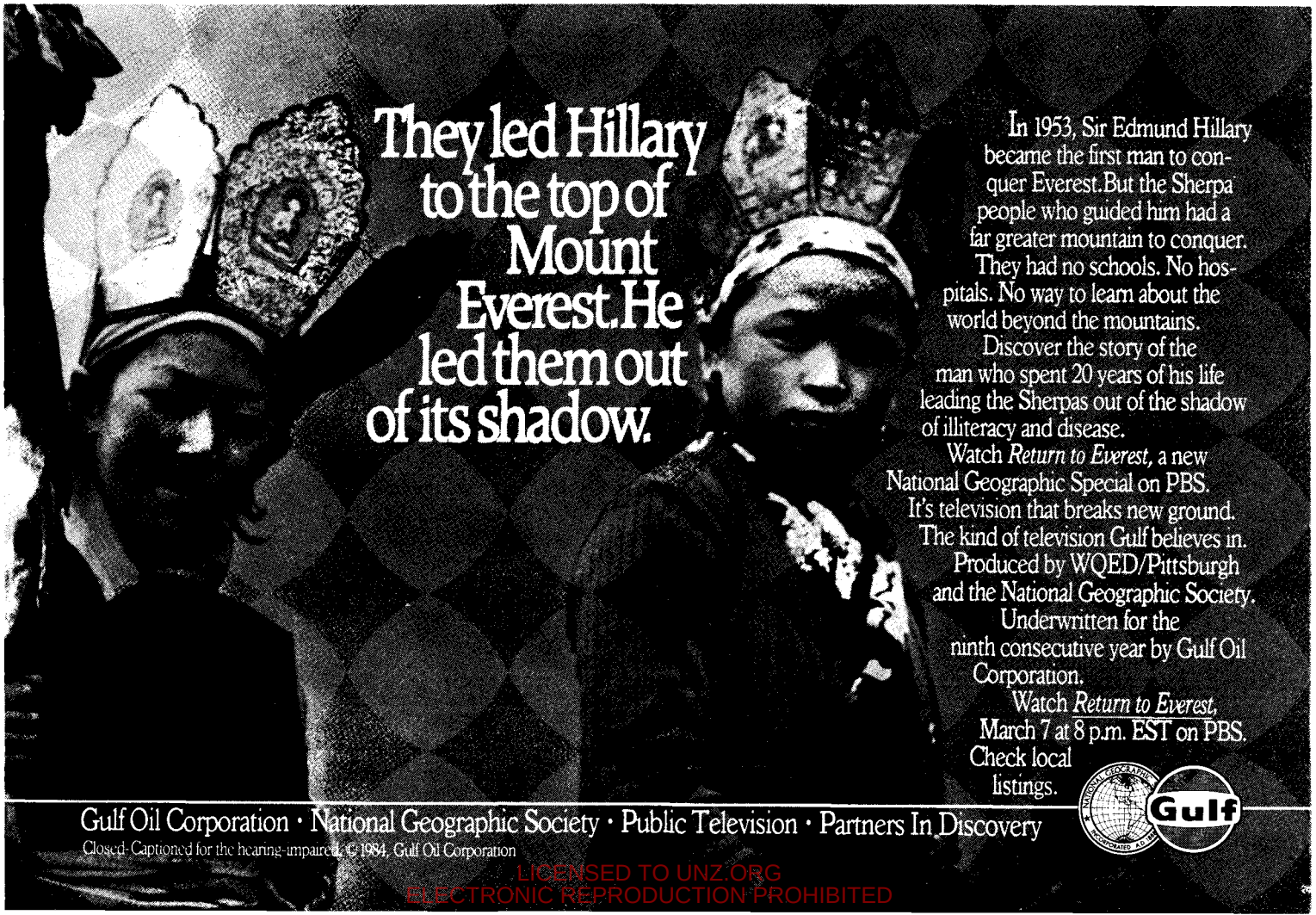
CHESTER E. FINN, JR.
Center for Education Policy
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee

PETER SKERRY writes:

Contrary to the educator whom Chester E. Finn, Jr. quotes with such approval, I say that a lens, no matter how "glittering," does not throw light on anything; rather, it focuses light already present. And although Mrs. Ravitch's book throws light on many things, a focus is precisely what it lacks, because she tries to have it both ways: criticizing the educational establishment while also saying that it hasn't done so badly.

I do fault Mrs. Ravitch for pulling her punches. In fact, Mr. Finn and I seem to agree on this point, for he argues that this is how she has gained the ear of educators. I too suspect that Mrs. Ravitch made "a conscious decision to write a book that the millions of people who comprise the education profession would be obliged to take seriously." Unfortunately, this conscious decision may have led her to place an unduly positive interpretation on the rather damning evidence produced by her own scholarship.

Speaking of having it both ways, Mr. Finn manages simultaneously to belittle the intellectual caliber of the education profession and to praise Mrs. Ravitch's book on the basis of its reception by that profession. And his basic criticism of me seems to be that I hold a scholar like Mrs. Ravitch to a higher standard than does the educational establishment. Needless to say, I am not offended. I do, however, resent the suggestion that I am "leathery"—an adjective that applies neither to my age nor to my taste in clothing.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The Democrats & the Kissinger Report

Penn Kemble

If you measure by votes, congressional seats, and other old-fashioned standards of political success, one "lesson of Vietnam" is that the Democratic party's identification with the cause of U.S. retreat was not a helpful thing. Nor is it clear—after the Cambodian holocaust, the terrors of the "boat people," and the unending wars of Indochina—that in thus sacrificing their selfish political interests, liberal Democrats were contributing to a noble cause.

All this suggests that Democrats, and liberals generally, might do well to take a second and closer look at the report and recommendations of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (the "Kissinger commission"). For first reactions from Democratic leaders and the liberal press were surprisingly harsh or dismissive, even though six of the twelve commissioners were Democrats—among them such ardent partisans as AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and former Party Chairman Robert Strauss.

Congressman Michael Barnes, the designated spokesman for the Democratic congressional leadership, described the report as "a war plan, not a peace plan." All the Democratic presidential candidates expressed deep skepticism about its overall conclusions, and most went further. Senator Alan Cranston accused the commission of "endorsing President Reagan's dreams of military victory by brutal dictatorship and assassination squads." Senator Ernest Hollings, normally a hawkish man, declared that the problem in Central America was largely located in the White House. Senator Edward Kennedy, not a candidate but surely a party leader, echoed that assessment: "The Kissinger commission does not understand that, in Central America, we have often been our own worst enemy."

There are not many Democrats who would admit—even to themselves—that they are more interested in attacking President Reagan's policies in Central America than in unseating him. But at the moment, with the party in the throes of its quadrennial delegate-selection processes, a good many Democrats are behaving as if that were so. There is, to be sure, much to debate in the Kissinger commission's report. But to call it a "war plan," and blame Ronald Reagan for a crisis in which foreign adversaries have had a large hand and which was already well under way when he came into office, could lead voters to suspect that, on this issue, it is the Democrats who are guilty of "unfairness."

It may well be, of course, that the Reagan administration will lack the confidence and intelligence to lure the Democrats into identifying themselves once again with retreat and defeat. In fact, there is one important sense in which our difficulties over Central America *can* be blamed on this administration: despite occasional blustering, it has so far not taken the whole matter seriously enough.

Concern about Central America was an element in the anxiety about world affairs which contributed to the Republican sweep of 1980. Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, and his UN ambassador, Jeane Kirkpatrick, went on to press the issue—the latter rather more effectively. But the dominant political forces at the White House grew so enthralled by the alchemy of supply-side economics that Central America was pushed onto the "back burner." The stirring patriotism of the Reagan presidential campaign gave way before tax lobbyists who seemed only to want to take the money and run. Even when the Reagan administration did address the region in its Caribbean Basin Initiative, anything that might arouse popular attention was muffled in a legislative battening on tax preferences, tariff levels, and trade quotas. The Republicans seemed to imagine that, given a supply-side booster, the invisible hand would somehow deal with Communism in the Caribbean.

As a result, by 1982 the trumpet which was supposed to summon us again had trailed off into a medley of tiresome commercial jingles. Reawakened by Central America, the old anti-Vietnam coalition began to regroup, and a new domestic political crisis threatened to develop. It was this threat—first recognized by the late Senator Henry M. Jackson, a Democrat, and discussed before such audiences as the Sheet Metal Workers Union and

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the Coalition for a Democratic Majority—that brought the Kissinger commission into being.

The political crisis at home that the Kissinger report seeks to overcome has been described as the failure of the American Center. This time, however, it is not a breakdown in the body politic—a polarization in public opinion like that which occurred during the confrontations and backlashes of the mid-1960's. Today the problem is more a disorder of the mind: an inability to cope with complexities in public issues, a sophisticated form of simple-mindedness.

The Kissinger commission recognizes that there are two factors at work in the crisis in Central America. One is the attack being orchestrated and supported by Cuba and its patron, the Soviet Union. Democracy and political progress, the commission believes, cannot be attained until this security threat is met. But the commission is no less concerned with the second cause: the array of social, economic, and cultural difficulties that have so afflicted this region, and that have made it a prime target for Communist aggression and intrigue. The problem is that our political culture—especially as reflected in the media—cannot apprehend even this moderate order of complexity. In the favorite taunt of reporters and editors in another election year, we seem to have trouble walking and chewing gum at the same time.

IN TRYING to forge a consensus, the Kissinger commission has wholeheartedly embraced the liberal analysis of Central America's internal crisis: great inequality of income and property, illiteracy, bad health, weak and corrupt judicial systems, political repression, and the rest. But while this litany of maladies is usually recited to argue that the United States should avoid the quagmires in which they breed, the Kissinger commission actually proposes to do something about them. The estimated cost, over a five-year term, comes to some $8 billion.

More surprising, from what has been described as a "Reagan-dominated" commission, is the practical program for how these aid funds would be spent. It adds up to what could be described as a Central American version of the Mississippi Freedom Summer. Thousands of U.S. teachers, agrarian advisers, management counselors, legal-services aides, health-care and even family-planning workers would be sent into the region, unloosing the Great Society on Central America. Boston University's President John Silber, a member of the commission, estimates that the number of U.S. personnel could go as high as 5,000. But he confidently predicts, on the basis of studies recently carried out by the Peace Corps, that such persons could be found—despite the laments of some conscience-keepers that this is a generation of self-seekers.

The emphasis of the report is emphatically against the traditional, top-heavy foreign-aid and technical-assistance programs. Like the Marshall Plan that serves as its model, this program would employ U.S. aid to build from the ground up. The stress is on aiding small business and entrepreneurs, on land reform, on projects such as housing construction and road building that would put numbers of people to work, and on fostering industries that would produce for local consumption. In combination with the considerable support offered to Central American trade unions, this strategy seeks to engender strong home markets in Central American countries. This approach was forcefully advocated by Lane Kirkland and it departs significantly from the earlier Caribbean Basin Initiative of the Reagan administration, which stressed foreign production for the U.S. market. Kirkland was concerned not only for U.S. jobs, but also for the independence and long-term strength of the Central American economies, and his approach was adopted only after much debate. (To the surprise of some, one of his most frequent allies was Republican Congressman Jack Kemp, a counselor to the commission.)

The mechanism proposed for implementing this aid program is as important a departure as the scope and character of the program itself. The commission proposes the creation of a new international body, a Central American Development Organization, which would administer a substantial portion of the aid. Membership in this new body would be open to the seven countries of Central America—including Nicaragua—and to the United States. This organization, in the commission's words, "would do what no existing national or international body now does": it would require, as a condition for participation, that member states not only observe human rights, but also adopt a specific set of democratic practices, among them free elections, freedom of the press, free trade unions, and an independent judicial system.

THE commission's report also deals in detail with the problems of achieving peace in Central America. Many critics of U.S. policy nowadays speak high-mindedly of negotiations and political settlements, as if these mechanisms were ends in themselves. When someone asks, Negotiations for what? or, What kind of political settlement?, he is belittled for quibbling or, more ominously, for promoting a "war plan." But a Democrat running for office in 1984 may be obliged to answer those questions. Someone may also remember to ask the candidate if he means negotiations and a political settlement like the ones we got in Vietnam.

Henry Kissinger, understandably, recognizes that problem. The report of the commission is painstakingly clear on the objectives it proposes for negotiations and a settlement. It points out that the insurgents in El Salvador have—as if in

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contempt of wishful doves in the United States—stated their own position with Leninist truculence. In a document transmitted to Ambassador Richard Stone last year, they declared that "the Salvadoran people need a negotiated settlement between the government and the FMLN/FDR—to bring about peace; they do not need elections."

The insurgents' position paper also makes it quite specifically clear that their objectives in negotiations do not concern procedures and security measures which might assure all parties a fair and open election. Instead, as the Kissinger report describes it, they see negotiations "as a means of scrapping the existing elected governmental structure and armed forces and creating a provisional civil and military authority in their place in which the rebel leadership would have a major role. . . ." (It is notable that all the Democratic members of the commission agreed in rejecting such terms for negotiations.)

As its alternative, the commission proposes the creation of an electoral committee, in which all political elements in El Salvador would be represented—including the FMLN/FDR. A cease-fire should then be arranged, and, with careful oversight by international observers, elections should be held.

The commission by no means limits its proposals to efforts at strengthening democracy in El Salvador. Perhaps its boldest stand—again, but for one particular, evidently endorsed by all members of the commission—is its affirmation of the necessity of continuing to seek ways to fulfill the original democratic promise of the Nicaraguan revolution. "The consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Managua would be seen by its neighbors as constituting a permanent security threat. Because of its secretive nature, the existence of a political order on the Cuban model in Nicaragua would pose major difficulties in negotiating, implementing, and verifying any Sandinista commitment to refrain from supporting insurgency and subversion in other countries." Moreover, the commission argues, to prevent the export of revolution from such a country "would require a level of vigilance and sustained effort that would be difficult for Nicaragua's neighbors and even for the United States."

The commission affirms that all diplomatic efforts at persuading Nicaragua to modify its internal and foreign policies should be pursued. But it explicitly rejects the proposition that a strategy of "containment" can be applied if Nicaragua refuses. Therefore, ten of the twelve commissioners —those opposed are Mayor Henry G. Cisneros of San Antonio and Professor Carlos F. Diaz-Alejandro—endorse the continuation of some form of U.S. aid to the anti-Sandinista insurgents. These groups, the commission says, "represent one of the incentives working in favor of a negotiated settlement."

This conclusion, arrived at by a jury of distinguished American leaders, could be the most important event in the American foreign-policy debate in a decade. It is a rejection of the notion that a Communist state is a state like any other, accessible to the normal methods of diplomatic and economic persuasion. It is a sober reckoning derived from many hard experiences: the failure of the understanding John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev supposedly reached over Cuba's role in this hemisphere; the Soviet exploitation of a host of pacts and agreements; the unraveling of the Vietnam peace accords; the betrayal by the Sandinistas themselves of their promise to the OAS that they would hold free elections if helped in overthrowing Somoza. The commission is saying that peace plans which leave totalitarian states with the capacity to exploit our trust prove not to be peace plans, and that, where our vital interests are at stake, experience obliges the United States to require more than gestures or smiles before we lower our guard. No longer do *we* bear the sole burden of demonstrating good faith.

THAT burden falls not only on the Communists. It also falls on those nations of the region who are making their own approaches to a negotiated solution: the so-called Contadora group consisting of Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Panama. The Kissinger commission tactfully commends the efforts of the Contadora group to create a regional framework for settling the conflict, and to establish principles on which such a settlement can be founded. But the commission also recognizes some hard realities. The chief of these is that the Contadora nations themselves are seriously divided over the goals of their proposed negotiation.

On the one hand, Mexico and on occasion one or another of the Contadora states seem inclined to accept a "Left" solution. This would leave Nicaragua firmly in the hands of the Sandinistas, while obliging all foreign powers to withdraw their military troops and bases from the region. While this proposal would nominally discourage Nicaragua from supporting the insurgency in El Salvador, it would do nothing about the large body of intelligence and guerrilla advisers who have slipped into Central America from Cuba and the Eastern bloc. Nor does the "Left" approach provide for any means of verifying or enforcing a peace agreement.

On the other hand, Venezuela and four of the five Central American states themselves—Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador—incline more toward the view held by the United States: there should be movement throughout the region toward more broadly democratic processes, with vigorous international supervision of agreements prohibiting aggression and subversion.

The Contadora process has a long way to go

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before these differences are reconciled and a regional consensus is developed that is strong enough to press for and enforce an end to the various conflicts. Mark Falcoff of the American Enterprise Institute, a consultant to the Kissinger commission, has likened the Contadora process to an airplane which can soar among the clouds, but is not capable of making a landing. It may some day discover how to land, but then, too, it could just as well crash. At this point it is an uncertain vehicle for the national interests of the United States or the Central American societies who are most threatened by the conflicts and who share our reservations.

The depth of the Central American crisis and the absence of any immediate or easy opening toward peace argue that the U.S. should expect to remain seriously involved in the region for some time to come. The Kissinger commission speaks strongly of the need for the U.S. to make no less than a five-year commitment, and to do it now. An aspect of that commitment entails unspecified but "significantly increased" levels of military aid to El Salvador, and additional training and equipment for the government of Honduras. The commission report, perhaps with a glance back at our experience in Vietnam, remarks that "the worst possible policy for El Salvador is to provide just enough aid to keep the war going, but too little to wage it successfully."

This aspect of the report, predictably, has drawn the greatest attention and criticism, with some asserting that it reflects an emphasis on military matters over political and economic problems. Yet the commission does not recommend any specific levels of military assistance. It does note that the Department of Defense has asked for increases for El Salvador of up to $400 million over the next two years, with the expectation that the amounts would be significantly lower thereafter. If this request were met, it would in the worst circumstances add up to $1 billion in military assistance over five years, compared to the $8 billion the commission proposes for economic assistance—hardly an emphasis on the military.

But the numbers game misses the point. As Senator Jackson argued when he first proposed forming the commission, military assistance should be considered "a shield behind which endangered nations can protect themselves from external threats while they go about the business of building democratic institutions." Commentators who never much agreed with Senator Jackson while he lived are now confidently insisting that even he would have quarreled with the Kissinger commission's recommendations on military assistance. But Jackson did have common sense, and it is plain that the amounts of military assistance now available to El Salvador are not enough to provide an adequate security shield. Guerrillas are able to destroy vital bridges, overrun garrisons, black out power systems, and in other ways foster chaos. Economic assistance alone is pointless in such circumstances, and anyone who proposes that we continue to make economic aid alone the centerpiece of our policy does not deserve to be taken seriously.

If we do give military assistance, how do we control it to prevent human-rights abuses by the security forces? The commission, as any newspaper reader knows, endorses the principle of "conditionality": that military aid to El Salvador be made contingent on progress toward democratization, the rule of law, and the prosecution of suspected offenders against human rights (for example, the murderers of the AFL-CIO land-reform workers and the American nuns). So far, the Reagan administration has swallowed its misgivings on this subject, leaving it to liberal Democrats, who won a great deal from the commission on this point, to assail the report that embodies their victory.

The commission evidently wrestled hard with the problem of how properly to condition military aid on human-rights progress. For the commission's mandate was not only to formulate a policy for Central America, but also to propose the means of fashioning a consensus to support that policy within the United States. There were many factors to take into account: partisan politics at home, labor politics (the AFL-CIO has a strong convention resolution on this question), the military situation in El Salvador, the national pride of the Salvadorans, and the commission's own abhorrence of the brutalities of some in the Salvadoran security forces. The outcome of its deliberations is more an effort at recasting the terms of debate about this matter than one of pressing a definitive answer.

The report contains a thoughtful discussion of modern, humane counterinsurgency techniques. These must at once defend strategic installations and permit fast reaction and pursuit, while also avoiding high civilian casualties. Such tactics require well-trained troops, with expensive equipment like helicopters. They require well-organized local militias to provide defense against small-scale terrorist attacks or economic sabotage. All this means that the defense forces must outnumber the guerrillas by something like ten to one. (The Salvadoran armed forces have less than a four-to-one superiority over the guerrillas.)

The commission describes how tendencies in some quarters of the Salvadoran security forces produce "a vicious cycle . . . in which violence and denial of human rights spawn reductions in aid, and reductions in aid make more difficult the pursuit of an enlightened counterinsurgency effort." It believes we must use our aid to win progress in human rights. But it also recognizes that we cannot simply cut off aid without hurting ourselves and, not incidentally, permitting a guer-

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rilla movement to come to power which, as the Vietnam experience demonstrates, will bring far more repression than there is today. Try to punish the death squads by cutting off our military aid, and their patrons probably will end up living comfortably in foreign villas, while the people of El Salvador and our own security interests both will suffer the effects of a Communist victory.

But there are many ways to use our aid to encourage elements in El Salvador and elsewhere that will respect human rights. Funds can be channeled to provide more professional training for the security forces (currently prohibited by U.S. law) and to strengthen those who conduct themselves by decent standards while driving from power those who do not.

This is the reasoning that underlies the note appended to the report by Henry Kissinger himself and two other members of the commission, which urges that "neither the Congress nor the Executive Branch interpret conditionality in a manner that leads to a Marxist-Leninist victory in El Salvador, thereby damaging vital American interests and risking a larger war." This note is not, its authors have been at pains to explain, a dissent from the report. It is rather an attempt to emphasize that while the United States cannot wash its hands of human-rights violations in El Salvador—we must use our influence to end them—neither must we deal with these violations in a way that will lead to something much worse from the point of view of human rights themselves. This may not satisfy the likes of Congressman Barnes, who is like a nurse in a television movie standing by the bedside of a diseased patient, waiting for some blip on the fever chart that will justify pulling the plug. But if the plug is pulled, this patient will not die; he will be consumed by a more cruel and contagious disease.

The possibility that things could actually be worse in El Salvador and Central America is the point that divides the commission and its principal critics. According to a story in the *Wall Street Journal*, this judgment gained force during a visit the commission made to Nicaragua. Instead of a government of romantic revolutionaries, in Managua the commission encountered a callow and abusive totalitarian clique. A briefing on the military situation in Central America conducted by a key Sandinista official gave clear evidence that the Nicaraguans are thoroughly trained and informed by Soviet-bloc intelligence services, and possess military capabilities which genuinely threaten U.S. security interests. This new Nicaraguan reality is compounded by the enormous increase in Soviet and Cuban military capacities elsewhere in the Caribbean, and by the newly declared emphasis of the Soviets and their allies on the "armed road" to victory in the region. (Boris Ponomarev, who heads the international department of the Soviet Communist party, has openly urged his comrades to exploit "the seemingly quite reliable rear lines of American imperialism.")

Given all this, the consolidation of totalitarian power in Nicaragua and neighboring states poses an unmistakable threat to the international strategic balance. If that view is "doctrinal," as Senator Daniel P. Moynihan called it, the doctrine at issue is whether the United States should continue to be a world power capable of resisting the expansion of the Soviet empire.

IN HIS account of the administration of President John F. Kennedy, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. recalls approvingly how another liberal Democrat—in an even less threatening time—assessed the prospect of a revolution against the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic. "Kennedy examined the situation realistically. 'There are three possibilities,' he said, 'in descending order of preference: a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the Trujillo regime, or a Castro regime. We ought to aim at the first, but we really can't renounce the second until we are sure that we can avoid the third.' " This is not a bad summary of the strategy of the Kissinger commission.

But it is a measure of how much has changed within the Democratic party in a generation's time that Senator Edward M. Kennedy, the nominal heir to John F. Kennedy, scoffs at the scope of an economic program to implement a strategy squarely within the tradition of the Alliance for Progress. "Even under the best of conditions," he writes, "the countries of Central America would be in no position to absorb $8 billion of economic aid over five years. The only recipients capable of absorbing that much money are the oligarchs and the corrupt officials with their bank accounts and their booty piling up in Miami."

It is also a measure of how much liberals have changed that the idea of linking U.S. aid for the Third World to well-defined democratic practices should have provoked such remarkably candid opposition. Evidently it is one thing to condition our aid on "human rights"—a term that can have many meanings—but quite another to tie it to the practices of political democracy. So it is that the New York *Times* columnist Tom Wicker, a bellwether for liberals, informs the commission that "the American faith that fair elections define a democratic society is simplistic at best and often misplaced." He further explains that "economic and political progress may be possible if, on the other hand, the new aid is administered in accord with *Central American* political and economic dynamics. . . ." One naturally concludes that these "dynamics" encompass the ideas and practices of the Marxist revolutionaries in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and that, in Wicker's view, we should not only stop resisting them, we should supply them with foreign aid.

Wicker's theme was even more clearly expressed

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in an op-ed piece in the *Times* by Daniel Oduber Quiros, the Costa Rican vice president of the Socialist International. Oduber lauded the commission's social and economic proposals. "But to force Central American countries to hold elections," he argued, "which in many cases would only be a cover for repression that denies freedom for the democratic process—might well further discredit democracy in countries where that word has historically meant cynicism and brutality."

The notion that there can be democratic processes without elections is not a new one—it is a stock item in the polemics of the "people's democracies." But it is another matter to see this idea taken so seriously in the pages of a liberal paper like the New York *Times*.

This difference between the commission and its critics about the prospects of democracy in Central America may be as important as any differences over the advisability of U.S. military assistance to the region. In the past, rightly or wrongly, many Americans were dubious about prospects that democratic institutions would soon take root in Indochina. But the Kissinger commission may find greater acceptance among the American people for its more optimistic report from Central America that "Everywhere we found hope for a democratic future and a readiness to sacrifice toward that end." To one degree or another, democratic institutions are already established in Costa Rica, Honduras, and Panama, and in such other Latin American countries as Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico. Important beginnings have also been made in El Salvador, soon to hold a second national election. The democratic opposition in Nicaragua has survived the depredations of the Sandinistas and the slander of their apologists. The hope for democracy in Central America thus does not appear to be some vestige of a far-fetched Wilsonian idealism.

It follows that, at this stage of the crisis, we can still reasonably aim at fostering decent democratic regimes in Central America. But that possibility depends in large part on the willingness of Democratic leaders now to join in a bipartisan program along the lines of the Kissinger report for the defense and development of the region. If they do so, they can redeem the Democrats from the widely held suspicion that they are the party of fear and retreat. They can even claim, with considerable justice, that the Democrats are more naturally the party of international development and democratization than the Republicans. If they do not, however, there will be political profit to be reaped—but not for Democrats, nor for democrats.

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Liberating Women: Who Benefits?

Midge Decter

It is a matter of no small wonder that amid all the urgent public and private conversation about the condition of women carried on throughout this nation for nearly two decades now there has been so little said on the subject of men. After all, without men there is no such thing as women—and vice versa. The very same nature that made them separate has entailed them beyond extrication. To be sure, the women's movement has devoted a considerable amount of thought and energy to analyzing and characterizing the male principle, but only *as* a principle and almost exclusively in terms of the uses of that principle in subjugating the female. Of the actual condition of the actual living men under its collective nose the movement has, to put it mildly, been singularly unmindful.

Such references as the movement has made to men on earth, as opposed to men-in-the-head, have focused on a range of experience apt to be quite unrecognizable to anyone who has been alive for less than a hundred years. The widely hailed gyno-sociologist Jesse Bernard, for instance, collected statistics designed to prove that middle-aged married men are in far better shape, psychically and even physically, than middle-aged married women. Dr. Bernard's statistics had mainly to do with such indicators as the onset of clinical depression, but they have been used widely to suggest that getting married relieves a man of his heaviest burdens and places them instead squarely on his wife. Perhaps even more puzzling to the ordinary observer than the idea of all those stable, happy, and healthy middle-aged men and their depressed and sickly wives are the numerous allusions found in the movement's literature to the ways in which husbands of the American middle class regularly strike terror to the hearts of their cowering wives and children (though frequently one or another of the movement's leaders, when asked, will confide that her own husband has been most, to use the current favorite word for it, "supportive").

It would of course be foolish to expect a group of women engaged in pursuing its special interests precisely by adopting an adversarial sexual posture to be more searching about the real state of affairs among its adversaries. But what of the men themselves? With only three or four notable exceptions (the names of George Gilder, Steven Goldberg, and Michael Levin come immediately to mind), men have chosen to respond to the assorted charges of bullying, selfishness, bigotry, exploitation, harassment, and emotional frigidity—leveled against them from virtually every public platform in the land and often in the privacy of their own homes as well—with bowed heads and bitten tongues. Why should this be?

As might be expected, the glibbest answer has come to be the commonest: because, runs this explanation, the men are guilty. They are guilty in two senses of the word, both guilty as charged and full of guilty feelings. Yet based on society's rich record of experience with other forms of popularly proclaimed guilt, such as liberal guilt, filial guilt, and parental guilt, no woman who has gone to war against men would be well advised to account herself quite so quickly and so easily the victor. Common sense—admittedly a resource that has since the Garden of Eden been in short supply when it comes to relations between the sexes—would dictate a bit of skepticism. Even the most sensitive of men, of women too, for that matter, could hardly be brought sincerely to acknowledge a lifetime of sin overnight.

So why have men responded to the women's movement as, in general, they have—that is, with a goodly amount of nervous giggling, a lesser but still not inconsiderable amount of protested sympathy, and a very great deal, perhaps a decisive deal, of complaisance? Politicians, understandably, suspect that there may indeed be such a thing as the women's vote and fear to flout it. Judges similarly have shown themselves to be particularly susceptible to all the items on a rapidly expanding roster of fashionable social theories, and they in turn have succeeded in convincing many employers of the costly but convenient virtues of compliance with their findings. But husbands, lovers, teachers, colleagues, and classmates?

The answer to this question promises to tell us something of central importance about ourselves. That is why one takes up

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the recently published *American Couples*,* the report of a huge sociological study of the current terms and conditions of coupledom undertaken by Drs. Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz, with deep—and not unrewarded—curiosity. Like many another tome about the sexes that has appeared among us over the past decade, *American Couples* is grounded in the belief that, in the words of the authors, "the social change of the past twenty years has given rise to new options in living as couples." So it is that among the kinds of couples examined with balanced attention are husbands and wives, cohabitors, homosexual men, and lesbians. Nevertheless, it is the first such research effort to give not only equal time but equally dispassionate time to the feelings and attitudes of the heterosexual men involved, the husbands and boyfriends of the women whose new possibilities for self-realization have been trumpeted as a turning point in human existence. Moreover, the areas covered include not only the obligatory secrets of sex but also work and that nowadays quite neglected factor in family relations, money.

The authors begin, as no doubt anyone attempting to think about coupledom under the aspect of "new options" would be impelled to do, with the current divorce rate. "The frustrating fact is that there is no guarantee of permanence. All kinds of couples, married and unmarried, heterosexual and homosexual, are seeking guidance because their relationships are in jeopardy." The authors wish to understand why this is so, not historically, not from the outside, but, like all obedient contemporary social researchers, in terms of individual feelings and choices. In obeisance to the present-day impermanence of relationship, the discussion here is rounded off with an account of which of the 300 couples studied—72 married, 48 cohabiting, 90 male homosexual, 90 lesbian—have broken up since the onset of the research. In between, there are the results, both anecdotal and statistical, of lengthy questionnaires, hours of taped interviews, and so on, divided under the authors' three main topics, money, work, and sex.

Like so much of social science based on the proposition that if you want to know what is going on with people you ask them and record their answers, much of what the book actually tells us belies its own thesis. The book claims to be treating an unprecedented situation, but one finds in it more continuities with tradition than discontinuities, more of the old than of the new—particularly in the realm so widely advertised as being subject to a revolution, namely sex.

Women, including lesbians, for example, are still on the whole monogamous, seeking what currently travels under the more spiritual name of "commitment" but is quite recognizable as the old-time, plain-Jane "fidelity." Nor do they show much greater inclination to be sexual initiators. Indeed, lesbians have considerable trouble with initiating sex and appear to be comparatively sexually inactive. Men, on the other hand, seem, in the absence of any compelling demand on them to be otherwise, inclined toward promiscuity. In all-men, i.e., homosexual, relationships, sex almost automatically *means* promiscuity. Nor are heterosexual men particularly stirred by women who are the sexual aggressors, certainly not over the long run.

Even practical daily matters remain to a surprising degree what they were. Men continue to mind doing housework more than women and continue to perform it, when they do, as a favor. Couples whose male partner has been given fixed and regular household chores tend to quarrel more than others. And women, including professional women, continue to prefer that their men make more money than they, as do the men. (Only lesbians are in general relatively unconcerned about who makes how much money.)

None of this is to say that the transactions of coupledom have not changed. They have. (Here I speak of heterosexual couples only, for homosexuals present to the understanding a completely different set of problems, and to society, a completely different order of consequences.) The "option"—some might say, moral requirement—to dissolve forthwith a marriage or a "living-together arrangement" that is deemed by either partner to be less than satisfactory is itself a change of enormous consequence. Any coupledom entered into under the shadow of the recognition that it need not necessarily be permanent is bound to be affected at its very basis.

It must be said, however, that the weight of this change is distributed rather differently from what is popularly being supposed. Here *American Couples* is most usefully, if unintentionally, revealing. And here it is at last that we face the question of what the so-called new freedom of women, with its accompanying explosion of disaffection, has come to mean to men.

UNLIKE many of the declaratory revolutions of our age, the sexual revolution does at least in one sense deserve its name. Not because, as some like Hugh Hefner would say, it has fundamentally altered the nature of the exchange leading up to and following from the act of sex—actually it hasn't. Each embracing heterosexual couple still comprises a man seeking sexual release and a woman seeking something far more diffuse: call it romance, tenderness, confirmation, affection, or the perennial "commitment." But the term revolution does apply to the arrangement of things between men and women because that arrangement has involved the creation of an actual new institution, that is, the household without marriage. Although this kind of household has not, at least so far, collected to itself the kind of supports—written laws and unwritten rules—usually associated with the establishment of institu-

* Morrow, 643 pp., $19.50.

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tions, it is coming everywhere to be accepted as an institution.*

Couples have different expressed motives for living together without the formality of marriage. In some cases, the partners have been unhappily married before and have no intention, as they say, of making the same mistake twice. In other cases, they are "contemplating" marriage and wish to take out a bit of insurance beforehand. In still others, the burdens, financial as well as administrative, of conducting an intense but possibly temporary love affair from two separate bases of operation make moving in together seem convenient and economical.

Whatever the motive, it is the dynamics of the initial decision to share a household—a process about which, alas, *American Couples* has little to tell us—that are of particular interest. Let us say a young man meets a young woman who attracts him and, no doubt sooner rather than later, takes her to bed. Chances are, both have been this way before. They like one another, or they "love" one another. They find they have, in the current parlance of coupling, "things in common"—mostly attitudes to self. One (or both) of them—if it is one, it is usually the young man—is not sure that he is ready to commit himself permanently. His therapist, his boss, his friends, his lawyer, his accountant are not sure either. His career is on his mind. He has been burned before. He doubts himself. Still, attractive, appropriate, and available women do not grow on trees, even today. Meanwhile, the woman's demands on his time and attention grow apace. Furthermore, she has a life out there: a job, a career, or an education to care about, friends, acquaintances, interests. His demands on her time and attention are also growing and, what is more, making him uneasy. She, too, is uneasy. While less afraid of marriage than he, she is being steadily subjected to the idea that she has an obligation to be her own person. Yet she wishes to have a man, one man. In their respective uneasiness, they grow a little tense, perhaps have a jealous quarrel or two. They set out to solve a problem not necessarily named or recognized between them: they will move in together. That way they can have more time together, resolve, they think, certain sexual tensions between them, and at the same time be freer for the other things in their lives. Chances are, then, that their decision has been reached not in joy but in something like anxiety.

In this, they are probably not so very different from couples who decide to get married. Except for one thing. Their household is in its very inception and definition conditional. Neither will be forced, by convention and circumstance, to put up with very much from the other. They have not plighted their trust. They have not thought of having children. They have not stood up before society and taken any vows of fidelity or of mutual cherishing. Marriage vows, to be sure, seem nowadays to be rather more honored in the breach, but they are vows, and to breach them is still to breach them. Cohabitation, made possible in general by the idea that a woman is as free as a man to indulge her sexual inclinations (and in the end made necessary by the fact that those inclinations lean heavily in the direction of monogamy), is not, like marriage, a public declaration of intent but rather a shared secret of convenience.

But the question remains, and seems from the evidence presented to hover perpetually over the satisfactions of the relationship: whose convenience? The young woman has removed herself, at least for the time being, from the sexual market. This is undoubtedly a great relief to her. She has in addition created for herself an arrangement that according to the analysis of the women's movement should be ideal. To wit, she has secured the companionship and attentions of a husband without at the same time having to be a wife. She is—happy woman—tied down and at the same time free.

Yet there are serpents, sometimes whole nests of them, in her Eden. For her freedom has also to an unprecedented degree begotten his. She is not his responsibility. Neither her well-being at home, her position in the world, nor, except as it pleases him, her financial security is in any but the most superficial and voluntary sense given over to his keeping. Her decisions about work (except, of course, a decision not to work at all) require no support from him. She has little or nothing to say about how he spends his money. To the extent that she does, there is always that half-open door on the household to threaten or reverse her influence. And as for sex, a subject to which we will return, here, too—or perhaps here above all—there is no ultimate pressure for them to work things out.

As in so many of life's relations, money is a very good symbol for the nature of the underlying exchange in cohabitation. To the resources invested in their life as a couple, both partners are contributors—usually, equal contributors. And since the woman is apt to make less money than the man, or, to put the matter more precisely, since she is likely to be drawn to a man who makes more money than she, her contribution to the household pool is apt to represent a much greater drain on her income. "Their" money, as opposed to his money or her money, is money jointly decided

* This acceptance has not yet, however, produced a satisfactory name for the arrangement. Drs. Blumstein and Schwartz and their fellow social scientists have settled on the terms "cohabitation" and "cohabitors." Many of the people who are themselves involved seem to use the rather more jaunty "cohabs." It is to be doubted that these terms will widely catch on. In the classic example used to illustrate the problem, will parents introducing the young man or woman living with their child say, "This is my child's cohab"? Parents of homosexuals seem to have hit on the simple "roommate" or even simpler "friend." But in an age of complexities, these terms offer complications of their own.

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upon but unequally valenced. We may imagine that couples who live together outside marriage do a good deal of extra bookkeeping, literally and figuratively. In the final accounts, it is a bookkeeping very much to the man's advantage.

"I don't ever want to be in the situation again," says one of Drs. Blumstein's and Schwartz's male cohabitors, perhaps a bit more brutally than his better-brought-up fellows would put it, "where some woman expects me to set her up for life." What then can "some woman" expect him to do? Warm her bed, keep her company when it is not too onerous to do so, hold her hand if and when he has the sympathy to spare, provide a focus, an organizing principle, for her home life, and—it is no small part of her need for him—be her escort in the world of coupledom. By surrendering to the female demand for a parody of domesticity, he has positioned himself to offer no more than a parody of loyalty. After all, "setting some woman up for life," as he has vowed never again to do, means more than paying her bills.

In short, women's so-called new freedom to lead their own lives, be their own persons, and make their own money has inevitably, though for advocates of this freedom no doubt unexpectedly, brought about the liberation of men.

MEN who marry would seem to be in a rather different boat. They do make vows, however tentative they and everyone else now understand those vows to be. And they do move into a household with a door that has at least for a while been closed on them and that, while no longer difficult to open, must be opened with the help of society and its legal authorities. But they cannot fail to have been affected by the terms of the new non-marriage. For one thing, in a time when the majority of marriages take place at a later age than they used to, many of these men have already had the experience of cohabitation, at least with their wives and possibly with a couple of other women as well. Such experience is bound to influence their habits of relation.

Indeed, it has often occurred to their elders to wonder how it is and why it is that a man and a woman who are already living together decide to marry at all. It has been quipped—and like many quips this one very likely contains a profound truth—that couples living together often get married in order to be able to get divorced. But there are probably less cynical explanations. No doubt the desire to have children plays some part. Or perhaps the woman, grown restless about what she senses to be the imbalance between them, finds the telling pretext—parents, family, social propriety—in the name of which she successfully presses her demand that he become her husband. (Despite the findings of feminist social science, it is probably safe to assume that most marriages still result from the demands of women.) Nevertheless, the fact that he has already, without having to assume institutional obligations, been provided certain of the comforts of home will color his own demands and expectations.

While marriage does settle the issue of property ownership, and in a large number of cases does also result in the straightforward sharing of money, it no longer seems to settle much else. Particularly under the influence of the culture of "women's rights," married couples seem to be forever caught up in the process of making, and remaking, decisions about everything: who does what, whose time is being spent on whose needs and preferences; and in general, who owes what to whom.

One overwhelming impression of *American Couples* is that the contemporary married couple is a social unit which can expound upon itself at almost endless length. Husbands and wives—particularly but not exclusively those who are members of the educated middle class—can tell any listener sympathetic enough or curious enough to want to hear just how they have ordered things between them from the most intimate to the most humdrum. Some couples quarrel about this, some do not, and some have rather different understandings of the same arrangements. But all of them have been schooled in the knowledge that their marriages are thoroughly describable undertakings. Nowhere in a very long book, for example, is anyone found to be saying in answer to any question, "Gee, I don't know, I've never thought about it." That is because they *have* thought about it; their ideas about life demand that they do so. Not a dish is washed, or a baby diapered, or a penny allocated in unconsciousness.

Now, the word "decisions" has lately become an honored, if not a downright magical, term among us, conjuring as it does visions of power, autonomy, and mastery. Therapists, social workers, and social scientists genuflect before it, as do the feminist activists from whom these others have dutifully taken their cues. It is believed that women who make decisions about everything for themselves, and better yet, also manage to impose these decisions on their men, are doing nothing less than exercising a new-found power to control their own destinies.

In the great play of the diverging interests of men and women, however, the exercise of this power, especially since it is so often done in a spirit of challenge and conflict, has turned marital responsibility into a zero-sum game. What she gains can only be accounted a gain when it can be claimed to be at his expense. Her self-sufficient "decision-making"—about her career, about whether to have an abortion, or about whether or not to cook all the dinners and perform all the tasks of mothering—has become an invitation for her man simply to desert the field. He will accede to her decisions, willingly granting her the opportunity to claim a victory, and then withdraw, emotionally, psychically, and in the end financially. He will withdraw to a place where he too is "autonomous,"

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if not indeed a complete and solitary atom. Pretending to sensitivity and minding one's tongue is a small price to pay for relief from having in a more genuine way to be concerned. Call a man a pig often enough and he will soon discover that there is little percentage in not behaving like one.

Here we have one of the new "options" that *American Couples*, deluded as is so much else in this field by easy notions of social change, totally fails to examine. The men are no less willing than the women to talk freely of things once considered delicate: their sexual performance and preferences, and the effect of having children on both; their feelings about success, their own and that of their wives; the management of money and their attitudes to same. But they say nothing, nor are they asked, about what they feel or even what they think about women, or what they say on the subject to other men. Above all, while there is some discussion about the causes of break-up among the couples who did not stay together—about, say, fighting over money, lack of ambition on the man's part, lack of sex, infidelity—there is no information about *how* they broke up: about how they, particularly the men, behaved in breaking up, and most important, about how the fathers of families behaved after the break-up.

A study of these questions is beyond the capability of anyone wielding questionnaires, yet it is the key to any understanding of what is really going on with men and women. The number of young women with young children, for instance, who have liberated themselves straight into total abandonment is a statistic that can only be obtained indirectly. But our eyes and our ears, if nothing else, tell us that number is legion—and growing. In a time when all that is asked of a man is that he appear to accommodate himself to a new kind of relationship with women, breaking up is cost-free and even divorce comes very cheap. He may be loath for many reasons to dissolve his marriage, but once the prospect of dissolution is dangled before him, it would be superhuman of him not to quicken somewhere in his being to the message that it is now every "person" for himself. That this message includes matters financial as well as psychic, any family court in the land can testify.

Not only has the feminization of coupledom under the new dispensation of women's sexual freedom led to a terrible degree of self-consciousness, it has led to an even more terrible degree of solemnity. Nowhere in a fat volume devoted to people talking about their lives together is there a single reference to that greatest of all bonding agents, laughter. Nor is there a single good-natured joke, tease, or chaff. True, people cooperating with researchers are almost by definition agreeing to be at their most earnest. Still, the impression is inescapable: coupling has in all its aspects become an unrelievedly pompous business. Even the assumption of sexual positions—surely the ultimate reminder of the sheer comedy of being alive—is discussed, measured, and counted as if who goes on top were a social fact of the most telling importance. No doubt each couple could supply a fully articulated explanation of its practices in this respect, and no doubt these explanations would all be cast in terms of the assertiveness or lack of assertiveness of the woman.

Such solemnity is bound to have a far more dampening effect on men than on women. Sex and the kind of coupledom it sooner or later catches men up in is not a voluntary undertaking for them. Rather, it must be experienced by them as a force over which they try to gain some control. Traditionally, they were promised by women that achieving this control would pay off for them in many other ways. The sexes had a deal: husbanding for wiving. Between them, provided they could be light-hearted and accepting enough, they could arrive at some *modus vivendi* fairly satisfactory to both. Sometimes, in an amused and sympathetic recognition of their respective different needs, they could achieve marvels of friendship—enough for a lifetime. Now, at least theoretically, there is supposed to be neither husbanding nor wiving, but rather an amalgam of separate, responsibly choosing, neither feminine nor masculine, individuals. In reality, of course, things seldom work out this way. Even Drs. Blumstein and Schwartz, forward-looking though they are, did now and then come across a couple who seemed to be friends in the sense described here. Ideally, however, male-female relationships are supposed to aspire to the homogeneous (a better word would be androgynous). Though ostensibly brought to pass by women, this is a cheat for women, because they not only need but prefer to be wives. But it is, paradoxically, a kind of boon to men. By agreeing to take part in the pretense that they no longer demand wiving, they free themselves from the need to be husbands. And all in the name of seriousness and sensitivity to women.

Few men, for example, would any longer be caught dead insisting that their wives stay home and look after the children. Some men actually insist the other way. The prospect of extra income in a time of high living standards accounts for some of this, but mainly it relieves them of the demand to pay real attention to the daily doings of the household. They profess among other things to find their working wives more interesting people, the preferred cant formulation being that a woman's job outside the home has helped her to "grow." The truth is that the husband of a working wife no longer needs to be as interested in her, or, possibly more to the point, as interesting *to* her; the outside world is taking care of both.

Bluntly put, men have been cut loose. And cut loose, not only by divorce but long before (indeed, long before marriage), they have every reason to display their compliance with the feminist revolution.

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We have seen the fruits of the new coupledom for women. If it were truly to their liking, or truly beneficial to them, they would have cause to be more cheerful in their relations with men than they once were. But of course they are not; on the contrary. Not a night goes by on television—to take only the most public forum—when individual women or groups of women cannot be seen expressing their current discomfiture. Some of these women claim that their discomfiture arises from the fact that the revolution has not yet gone far enough. Some claim that their uneasiness arises from the fact that they themselves have not gone far enough, that they have not yet succeeded in erasing from their souls the last dying vestiges of centuries—or is it millennia?—of conditioning: they cannot be aggressive enough, they fear success, they are still saddled with the impulse to be "good," and so on. Some, and their number seems to be growing, are merely inarticulate and incoherent, saying something in one sentence and taking it back in the next. All, all, are still dissatisfied. The feeling that they have made real progress still escapes them. Through it all are their male interlocutors, smiling and nodding and keeping the secret.

Off camera, where women, especially educated young women, congregate to speak unofficially to one another, they do not say that men are oppressors, manipulators, pigs. They say that men are "wimps." And they say it with if anything greater —though quieter—hostility than their activist sisters have mustered in excoriating men for their brutality. What these educated young women mean by wimps they themselves do not know and cannot precisely say. They tell stories that, without their being able themselves to pinpoint the difficulty, are stories of sickly vanity, of self-preoccupation, of fears and narcissistic anxieties—in other words, of unmanliness. Without being quite conscious of it, deprived of the language in which to define it, they are complaining to one another of male withdrawal.

But the great liberation given to men by the terms of the declared liberation of women—is it in the end a benefit even to them? Is "liberation" what people need, men or women? Specifically, is what they need the liberation of the sexes from one another, from the burdens that they represent to one another, from their dependence on one another, from the power—yes, even the coercive power—they exercise over one another? That women have grown glum with whatever successes they have so far achieved in liberating themselves from men cannot be denied. But the men?

When a woman falls carelessly into a man's bed rather than being either drawn, inveigled, or ultimately pushed there, when her sexual partnership costs him nothing in the way of pursuit, by that much does the force of sex in a man's life decline. The accomplishment will be all in the performance, and the performance in turn will corrode his energies with the acids of self-consciousness.

When the money he earns remains spending money rather than the means for taking on the manly duty to support others, by that much will his earning of it, and his spending of it, come to seem without consequence. Not for nothing do married men with real dependents tend to earn more and tend to be more nourished by their achievements. Fathers who do not support their children are these days supplied with many helpful rationalizations, such as that it should be society's responsibility, their own primary "responsibility" being to themselves. But in the long or not so long run, they are beset by the symptoms of a decisive diminution of self-respect. If they are ghetto kids, they spend their lives hanging out on street corners. If they are members of the middle class, they grow truculent and defensive in their own style, often on the couches or in the group circles of psychotherapy.

Finally, when a man withdraws psychically and emotionally from the no doubt often bewildering and often painful effort to negotiate with the psyches and emotions of women, by that much is he thrown upon the debilitating, inadequate, and boring resources of self. Saints and other geniuses of the spirit may find enough to live on in solitary engagement; ordinary people literally make themselves sick.

Marriage, real marriage as distinct from the new "arrangement" called coupledom, is not heaven and not even in the neighborhood of heaven. But those, especially those women, who think they have willed themselves or contracted themselves or argued themselves into a more reasoned and more just alternative to it have done themselves little good. And those men who have jumped at the chance to reap their own special benefits from the situation have done themselves even less.

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No Hitler, No Holocaust

Milton Himmelfarb

I

For some years after the Bolshevik Revolution, young people in the Soviet Union could leave school thinking that Peter the Great was the name given to economic modernization and political centralization in late feudal Russia. Their teachers' insistence on impersonal historical forces had turned a person into a personification, an abstraction, a metaphor.

Hitler has been disappearing behind abstractions. If he is mentioned at all, it is likely to be as a metaphor.

In 1982 two articles with "Holocaust" in their titles appeared here, Henryk Grynberg's "Appropriating the Holocaust" (November) and Hyam Maccoby's "Theologian of the Holocaust" (December). Each mentions Hitler only once, and only in a quotation: Grynberg quotes the President's Commission on the Holocaust, ". . . the Jews were Hitler's primary victims . . . ," and Maccoby quotes Emil Fackenheim, "Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler."

In Jacob Katz's "Was the Holocaust Predictable?" (May 1975), on the other hand, Hitler is real. Katz says "Hitler" 28 times, "Führer" twice, "one man" once, and "this man" once. I wish he had not stopped just short of saying, explicitly, "No Hitler, no Holocaust."

No Hitler, no Holocaust. And if there had been no Churchill?

Thoughts like these trouble us both intellectually and emotionally. Intellectually, believing that Hitler nearly destroyed our world, or that Churchill saved it, can seem close to believing with Carlyle—of whom Jews, especially, are bound to be leery—that history is but the biography of great men. It can seem close to taking literally Pascal's meditation on Cleopatra's nose. Many of the best historians in the past generation or two have held biography, the concern with the particulars of the life of this personage or that, to be rather quaint, a form of gossip. Nor have they a much more exalted opinion of narrative ("what happened") history. For them what counts is geography, demography, technology, *mentalités*. They see great men and events affecting the human race little more decisively than Cleopatra's unsnubby nose did.

Understanding Bishop Berkeley's philosophy to deny that physical objects are real, Samuel Johnson said, "I refute it *thus*," and kicked a stone. Did some of the new historians refute their own philosophy by taking care to vote when Mitterrand and Giscard contested the Presidency of France?

If it is wrong to hold any one man responsible for the fateful dementia of World War I, it is not wrong to hold the one man Lenin responsible for the Bolshevik Revolution. He was no more of his time and place than any other Russian, yet only he, in his particularity of heredity and environment, of constraint and freedom, did what he did. By himself he could not have made the revolution, but without him it would not have been made and we would be living in a different world entirely. Lenin was not the sufficient cause, but he was the necessary cause.

And so with Hitler. Hitler willed and ordered the Holocaust, and was obeyed. Traditions, tendencies, ideas, myths—none of these made Hitler murder the Jews. All that history, all those forces and influences, could have been the same and Hitler could as easily, more easily, not have murdered the Jews. He could more advantageously have tightened the screw of oppression. That the Jews were not being murdered, that they were only being humiliated and exploited, would not have caused his followers to grumble, let alone to rebel.

Anti-Semitism was a necessary condition for the Holocaust, it was not a sufficient condition. Hitler was needed. Hitler murdered the Jews because he wanted to murder them.

Nor does anti-Semitism explain the men who pulled the triggers or released the gas. Let us suppose that Hitler's Viennese years had made him as anti-Slavic as anti-Semitic, or maybe even more. Or let us suppose that on account of German memory, anxiety, and ambition Hitler had decided that rather than murder the Jews, or before murdering them, he should subjugate the Slavs, starting with gas chambers and execution squads to rid himself of the educated. Would there have been any lack of men to carry out such an order? The thing would have been done, as in large part it was done.

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Maccoby recalls "Himmler's notorious speech to SS officers in which he lectured them on the moral imperative of stifling their feelings of nausea about the mass killings" of Jews. If Himmler had lectured the SS officers on the moral imperative of steeling themselves to their heroically hard duty of extirpating the Slavic peril, they would have been as dutiful about Slavs as they were about Jews. The obedience of Himmler and the SS was to Hitler, not to anti-Semitism. Himmler was anti-Russian as well as anti-Semitic, but when Hitler made his pact with Stalin the SS cooperated cheerfully with the NKVD.

That one man made so much difference may be even harder to accept emotionally than intellectually. The disproportionate frightens us. We need to believe that causes are proportionate to effects. We want to think that our world is a cosmos, and here is evidence that our world is a chaos. We feel bad enough knowing about the Holocaust, but if we have to accept that one man decreed the Holocaust we can feel still worse. We would rather talk about socioeconomic stresses and strains, political backwardness, group psychopathology, religious hatred, racism.

All those things were indeed there, and Hitler was indeed affected by them—affected, not determined. Those things necessarily meant trouble for the Jews, they did not necessarily mean Holocaust.

II

Applauding Fackenheim's resolve to "reject all facile deterministic explanations—such as the attempts to interpret the Holocaust in terms of economics, or xenophobia, or the vicissitudes of German history—" Maccoby nevertheless yields to his own determinism. He tells us that we must understand "the Christian background of the Holocaust." For him anti-Semitism is inseparable, all but indistinguishable, from a timeless, unchanging Christianity: "The Jews in the [Christian] scheme are . . . the earthly agents of the cosmic powers of evil. . . . When a community [viz., Christendom] has been taught over the centuries that it is . . . virtuous to persecute them [viz., the Jews], it is only a step (albeit a large one)" to that speech of Himmler's.

This is like saying "it is only a step (albeit a large one)" from an uncomfortable fever of 100° to a lethal fever of 107.° The step is not from less to more, it is from one kind to another kind altogether. "Only a step (albeit a large one)" papers over a chasm.

I know a man who was a young lawyer in Germany when he was forced to close his office and prepare to emigrate. When his secretary cried, he said, "Don't worry. This sort of thing happens to us every two or three hundred years." He meant being cast down from the heights to the depths, for which there were precedents aplenty in Jewish history. He could not imagine the Holocaust. It lacked precedent.

Maccoby knows, of course, that "the Holocaust . . . had not yet happened in world history." Why did it finally happen, and only in the fifth decade of the 20th century? He adduces "the continuance into the post-Christian era of deeply-implanted fantasies about the Jews" and "the release afforded by Nazism from all vestiges of the restraint imposed by traditional Christian morality, which had hitherto acted as a counterweight to [anti-Jewish] Christian mythology." But is not "the release . . . from . . . traditional Christian morality" in a "post-Christian era" only another way of saying that not Christianity but the weakening or supersession of Christianity was responsible for the Holocaust?

A further proof of Christianity's responsibility, he says, is that "unsophisticated . . . people in Europe" later reasoned that after all, the Jews "are the Christ-killers, aren't they?" But simple people may have said that out of a simple need for theodicy, the vindication of God's justice. Jews call this *ẓidduq haddin*, at burials declaring with the Bible, "The Rock, His doing is perfect." In Israel itself simple Jews from Muslim lands have been known to say that the Ashkenazim who perished in the Holocaust must have been very sinful, for God to punish them so.

When people who are not simple say such a thing we have a more serious problem. For the late Rav of Satmar and his disciples, the Holocaust was a visitation upon the whole house of Israel for the rebellion of too many of its sons and daughters against God and His commandments, and for their attaching themselves to the Devil (the "Other Side") and his Zionism. Satmar is not simple, only implacably anti-modern. In a modern such a theodicy is particularly hard to stomach. I shall never forget my revulsion, and everyone else's, when to a group of Jewish theologians and writers a professor of philosophy intoned, in an exaggerated East European (mis)-pronunciation of the Hebrew, his solution to reconciling Holocaust with God's justice: the penultimate verse of the psalm that a Jew recites more often than any other, the 145th: "The Lord watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked will He destroy."

III

Christianity was hostile to the Jews and Judaism, but when Christianity ruled and was strong Jews knew subordination, expulsion, even massacre, not Holocaust. If one sentence can summarize Church law and practice over many centuries, it is this: the Jews are to be allowed to live, but not too well.

Obviously, this does not mean that most Jews fared worse than most Christians: think of 12th-

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century England or 19th-century Russia. Or take literacy. About medieval Western Europe, G.G. Coulton concluded that the average Jewish layman was more literate than not only the average Christian layman but also the average priest, the Christians' specialist in literacy. "Not living too well" is the sort of thing implicit in Casanova's saying that for a doctorate in law he wrote a dissertation on the prohibition of building a synagogue higher than a church. The dissertation may have been fictitious but the prohibition was real.

Muslim countries prohibited Jews from riding horseback. In Jerusalem I once asked a mounted policeman for directions. To talk to him I had to crane my neck, I had to look up to him. A pedestrian has to look up to an equestrian. For Muslims it was unnatural to look up to a Jew, and not only for Muslims. To Christians, Saladin was a foeman worthy of Richard Lion-Heart's steel. After the eviction of the last Crusaders from the Holy Land, Christians of all sorts, Western and Eastern, Latin and Greek and Syrian and Armenian and Coptic, became used to Muslims on horseback protecting the Christian Holy Places and keeping the peace between the Christian sects. But Jews on horseback? Jewish police protecting Christian Holy Places and keeping the peace between the Christian sects? A Jewish state in the Holy Land? Unnatural. It occurred to me then that such feelings might help to explain the coldness toward Israel of Christians like the late Bible scholar Father Roland de Vaux, and maybe of the Vatican.

In general harsh in his judgment of Christianity, on one point Maccoby is too tender. It was not "traditional Christian morality" which kept Christendom from killing Jews. Charlemagne did not doubt his Christian morality when he proved the truth of Christianity to the pagan Saxons by killing them. Some centuries later, Charlemagne's successors likewise did not doubt their Christian morality when they disproved the Albigensian heresy by killing the Albigensians. In World War II the Ustashi, Croatian Catholic Christians, murdered as many Serbian Orthodox Christians as they could, and it now appears that the Ustashi were encouraged by Franciscans, whose patron saint, they tell us, would not hurt a fly. More than "traditional Christian morality" it was "Christian mythology," the special place of Jews and Judaism in Christian teaching, that granted the Jews a special privilege of life. In principle, at least, the Inquisition had jurisdiction not over Jews but only over Christian heretics and apostates, actual or suspected, including ex-Jewish Christians and their descendants.

In the Ashkenazi rite, *Av haraḥamim* ("Merciful Father") memorializes the Jewish martyrs killed by Crusaders in the Rhineland. It is a prayer for divine retribution, prefiguring in sentiment, if not in art, Milton's "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont": "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints" the Waldensians. Ivan G. Marcus (*Prooftexts*, January 1982) summarizes the 12th-century German churchman Albert of Aix's denunciation:

> . . . when the Crusader rabble was itself decimated in Hungary, that disaster was a sign of God's judgment. The Christians who had violated Church law by forcibly converting, not to speak of murdering, Jews were themselves justly punished.

It bears repeating: the Church law that protected Jews embodied "Christian morality" less than it embodied "Christian mythology."

In modern times, with the dethronement or mildening of Christianity in the enlightened parts of Europe, the Jews' privilege of life was replaced by a right to citizenship. Hitler revoked both.

IV

Was Hitler a Christian? He was an anti-Semite, and Maccoby tells us that anti-Semitism lies at the heart of Christianity.

The Jews are old, Christianity is old, hatred of the Jews is old. "Anti-Semitism, -ic, -ite" are so new that they do not appear as entries on their own in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. "Anti-Semite," undefined and dated 1881, only illustrates "anti-." ("Semite" mentions "Hebrews, Arabs, Assyrians, and Aramaeans," not Jews in the present.) "Semitic" includes a parenthesis: "(In recent use often *spec.* = Jewish)." For "Semitism" one definition, illustrated by something written in 1885, is "In recent use, Jewish ideas or Jewish influence in politics and society." "Anti-Semitism," therefore, is only a hundred years old in England and only slightly older on the Continent, where the word originated. Why the new name for an old thing?

The thing was not altogether old.

In World War I some German had the bad idea of saying that the British soldiers were militarily contemptible, so they promptly called themselves the Old Contemptibles. That is not how it was with the anti-Semites. They coined the name for themselves, and "anti-Semitism" for what they believed and propagandized. They needed a new name to distinguish their enmity to the Jews from the older, religious kind. They did not believe that Christianity was truer and better than Judaism, or that Jews were to be guarded against because of their Judaism: "Say this for the old-fashioned Jews, they are easier to recognize and guard against than the modern kind, who are abandoning their Judaism." Those who used the new name believed something new, that the uncreative, parasitic Semitic race endangered the creative, productive Aryan race. The neologism took root and spread, displacing the older "Jew-hatred." Soon people were also using it anachronistically, so to speak, as by applying it to antiquity.

Aside from the troubling anomaly of the New Christians in Spain, tainted indelibly by their Jewish blood, the rule in Christendom was

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that baptism, which Christians were exhorted to promote zealously, made a Jew into a Christian; but a Nazi ditty went: *"Ob Jud, ob Christ, ist einerlei,/In der Rasse liegt die Schweinerei"* ("Whether the man's a Jew or a Christian makes no difference, it's his race that's filthy"). Many anti-Semites hated Christianity itself as Jewish. Ludendorff, second only to Hindenburg among the Kaiser's war lords, wanted Germans to throw off Semitic Christianity and return as good Teutons to Woden and his pantheon. Neal Ascherson reports (*New York Review*, November 24, 1983) that Klaus Barbie the boy had been a Catholic but that Barbie the member of the Hitler Youth was "committed to anticlerical neopaganism."

Anti-Christian anti-Semites could play down their anti-Christianity in order to make a united front with Christian anti-Semites, and Christian anti-Semites could contrive not to notice the anti-Christianity of people otherwise estimable for their anti-Semitism. The Christian and anti-Christian anti-Semites agreed that the Jews, having by a swindle acquired French/German/etc. citizenship, were now swindling, corrupting, and lording it over the true Frenchmen/Germans/etc.

Hitler the boy was Christian but Hitler the man was anti-Christian. (Remarkably, this enemy of the liberal Enlightenment scorned Judaism and Christianity not like Ludendorff the Teutonizer but like Voltaire the Enlightener.) Hitler was about as Christian as Stalin, the ex-seminarian.

V

Grynberg agrees with Maccoby: " . . . the Holocaust was prepared and caused by Christian anti-Semitism. . . ."

Grynberg "left Poland in 1967." The late Sam Levenson used to say that Jewish kids don't go to summer camp, they're sent. That is funny. What is less funny is that in 1967, the year when Israel had the impudence to win the Six-Day War, Jews did not leave Poland, they were pushed out. Gentile Poles were happy with Israel's victory because it was a black eye for Moscow and Moscow's puppets in Warsaw: "Our Jews beat their Arabs." Jews were happy because—well, because they found to their surprise that they were still Jews, a little. The Polish government could not banish all those Poles, but it could banish nearly all the Jews.

Between the two world wars the ratio of Jews to the total population was higher in Poland than anywhere else except Palestine. Jews were Polish in citizenship, but for the most part not in language or culture. Governments were Christian and nationalist. They were also anti-Semitic, some more than others. In a notorious incident in the 30's a Polish government did not readmit Polish Jews whom the Nazis had expelled from Germany, but no Christian Polish government ever expelled Polish Jews.

In 1967 no more than one or two Jews were left in Poland for every hundred in 1937. This remnant was Polish in language, culture, and national feeling. The government was Marxist, anti-Christian. Christian Polish governments had not expelled un-Polish Polish Jews, but an anti-Christian government expelled Polish Polish, Marxist, anti-Zionist Jews—as "Zionists."

Grynberg reminds us that the Pope visiting Auschwitz repeatedly apostrophized the slain as Jews. In the Soviet Union the anti-Christian authorities have never consented to recognize the slain of Babi Yar as Jews.

In 1968 the Polish army's journal based a good part of its case against "Zionism" on a denial of the Bible's account of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt and their exodus under Moses. Even if we concede the relevance of such antiquarianism, the argument remains odd. Marxists pride themselves on being *wissenschaftlich*, scientific, and modern *Wissenschaft* of the Bible and the ancient Near East, whether practiced by believers or by unbelievers, Jews or Christians, is skeptical of what the Bible says about Egypt and exodus. Marxists might therefore be expected to crow that even believers, so long as they make any claim to *Wissenschaft*, must pooh-pooh the Bible as history. Instead those Polish Marxists chose to put forth a bit of anti-Semitica situated not in any pretense to modern scholarship, nor in any Christian tradition however anti-Jewish, but in a pagan tradition stretching back to Tacitus and finally to Manetho, an Egyptian priest who lived some centuries before Christianity. Countering the Jews' version of their history with his anti-Jewish version, Manetho said that a thousand years earlier the Israelites had left Egypt not triumphantly but shamefully, expelled as lepers.

The main reason why the Polish Marxists repeated this ancient nonsense, preferring it to traditional Christian anti-Judaism and to modern Bible scholarship, must be that Marx himself had repeated it. Only that tradition about Egypt and exodus derides the Israelites. Both in antiquity and in modern times it has been used to legitimate enlightened distaste for the Jews.

Just a few intellectual generations before Marx, mediated to him by the French Enlightenment of the 18th century and radical German Protestant theology of the early 19th, were the English deists, of whom Thomas Morgan was particularly nasty. On one of the Ten Plagues he wrote:

> And perhaps, one Reason why the Egyptian Sorcerers could not create Lice, might be because they had none about them, and the Israelites were better stock'd; for according to all Antiquity, Leprosy, Scabs, and Lice, were some of the Plagues with which these Shepherds, before their Expulsion had infested the Egyptians.

Traditionalist Christians might hate Jews and Judaism, but none ever jeered at Israelite sacred history and especially its core, the exodus. They believed that that history now belonged to them,

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the new Israel of the spirit, having passed to them from the Jews, the old, disinherited Israel of the flesh. Only an anti-Christian could laugh about "Scabs, and Lice" and "Expulsion," and only in reliance upon the anti-Jewish pagans of "all Antiquity."

Having suffered from anti-Christian anti-Semitism, Grynberg condemns Christian anti-Semitism. And though, like Maccoby, Grynberg denounces abstractions, for him too Hitler is hardly more than an abstraction.

VI

In a way, it is easier to understand the Christians who blame Christianity for the Holocaust than the Jews who blame it. Historian or theologian, a Christian can feel that for Christians it is morally insufficient to strike the balance dispassionately and judge that Christianity in the 20th century is not primarily responsible for the Holocaust. But there is more. Perhaps without being aware of it, Christians may be moved to say that Christianity is responsible because responsibility implies power, and they would rather think Christianity guilty and still powerful than guiltless and powerless. Be that as it may, such people recognize an obligation of Christian teachers to lead their fellow Christians in contrition and in confession of sin.

One-sidedness in preaching need not be a vice, and historically Christians have had less cause than Jews to fear being overheard by the Others, the unfriendly majority. When the Israeli commission of inquiry found Israel's government and army indirectly responsible for the killings by Lebanese Christians in Shatila and Sabra, many Jews outside Israel were upset. They thought, "That may be all very well to say in Israel, it's a Jewish state. But here, what will the Gentiles think? Won't they just love hearing Jews say that Jews are murderers!" Catholics amid Protestants may have corresponding reticences, and Protestants amid Catholics, but seldom Christians as such. If Christians overemphasize the guilt of Christianity, that does them honor. Let them by all means continue—provided, however, that in emphasizing how anti-Semitic Christianity was in the past they do not deny how anti-Semitic neopaganism can be in the present. Chastising what is left of Christendom, some Christians now tend to be if not pro-neopagan then at least anti-anti-neopagan.

So, precisely because Christians, or most of them, would rather not hear about Christian anti-Semitism, their teachers ought to tell them about it. Applying the principle of telling people what they would rather not hear, what should Jewish teachers tell Jews? But first, what do we like and what do we dislike to hear?

John G. Gager's *Origins of Anti-Semitism** is an impressive addition to scholarship. The book's substantive findings are evenhanded:

> Only in a highly restricted sense can Western anti-Semitism be said to originate in pagan and Christian antiquity. The presumption of a universal anti-Semitism in antiquity, pagan or Christian, has been made possible only by suppressing, ignoring, or misinterpreting the mass of nonconforming evidence.

That is Gager the scholar, the authority on early Christian society. Gager the citizen says that as a concerned but disinterested outsider to the Jewish-Christian debate—doubtless meaning that he is not a Jew and no longer is a Christian—he thinks it necessary to restore balance by emphasizing the good in pagan antiquity, on acount of the prevalent "belief in a uniformly anti-Semitic pagan antiquity . . . [which] has in different ways served the interests of both Christians and Jews."

It is Gager the citizen that I am not sure I agree with fully. The reason he suggests for Christians' belief in a uniformly anti-Semitic pagan antiquity is plausible: "It has served to absolve Christianity of full responsibility for anti-Semitism in the West." Less plausible are his finding that Jews share the belief and the reason he suggests for it: "Pagan persecution is held to have greatly strengthened the cohesiveness which has enabled Judaism to survive."

A priori, Gager should be right. The Jews' three pilgrimage festivals celebrate redemption from Egyptian bondage and triumph over that primordial, archetypal pagan oppressor, Pharaoh. Moses' Song at the Sea is part of the Jewish prayer book, to be recited every morning of the year. In Exodus we are commanded to remember the Sabbath because of Creation, in Deuteronomy to keep the Sabbath because of our bondage in Egypt. Accordingly, our Sabbath benediction is in commemoration—*zikkaron*, *zekher*—of both. Purim celebrates victory over the pagan enemy Haman, and Hanukkah over the pagan enemy Antiochus. So much for our celebrations. Our mournings—primarily Tish'ah be'Av—recall the destruction of the First Temple by the pagan Nebuchadnezzar and of the Second by the pagan Titus.

What an outsider can miss is that the very Jews who rejoice on the feasts and mourn on the fasts can be taken aback when asked to remember that all these enemies were pagan, and that all but Titus were pre-Christian. The unstated assumption, by no means limited to the ignorant and unsophisticated, is that Gentiles = Christians. (I had to keep reminding myself that a Baghdadi Jew's reminiscences about Gentiles were about Muslims.)

Maccoby says that behind "the world's" transparently anti-Jewish denunciation of Israel for killings perpetrated by Christians is, again,

* Oxford University Press, 312 pp., $24.95.

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Christianity. But even better than Americans he as a European should know that that denunciatory world was mostly the world of leftist parties and journalists, nearly all Gentile but few Christian. After terrorists attacked a Roman synagogue, wounding many and killing a little boy, a remorseful Italian journalist cried out that the media, slipping from anti-Israel to anti-Jewish, had in effect incited the attack. I do not think he was referring chiefly to *l'Osservatore Romano*.

VII

ONCE, speaking in Israel to mostly Modern Orthodox Jews, I said: If the Church had wished, no more Jews than Albigensians would have survived in Christendom. The Church did not want us to live well, but it let us live. In the Hitler years, who would not have welcomed back the rule of the Church? Then I used the Polish example to make the point that anti-Christian anti-Semitism continues to be worse than the Christian kind.

This was received without enthusiasm. "How about Pobedonostsev?" someone asked. Pobedonostsev, the lay procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in the reigns of Alexander II and Nicholas II, believed that the best solution to "the Jewish problem" in Russia would be for a third of the Jews to emigrate, a third to be baptized, and a third to starve to death. (He also despised the West and Catholicism, prizing autocracy and caesaropapism in state and church.)

I answered: Practically every Jew in the world longed for an end to the czarist regime. With the revolution of 1905 Pobedonostsev was dismissed. He died soon afterward. A few years later still, anti-Semites brought Mendl Beylis to trial on a charge of killing a child for the Christian blood that they said Jews use in preparing *matzot* for Passover. The jury in the czarist court exonerated Beylis and set him free.

After forty years and two world wars, in Communist Czechoslovakia, Rudolf Slansky and seven others officially identified as "of Jewish origin," fervent Communists and anti-Zionists, were charged with treason in the service of Zionism, declared guilty, and hanged. Then, in Russia proper, came the Doctors' Affair, in which Jewish doctors were accused of having conspired, in the service of Zionism, Wall Street, and the CIA, to poison the leaders of the Soviet state and the Communist party. The Jews of the Soviet Union are convinced that only Stalin's providential death spared them to live their wonted life of anxious inferiority.

In the old Russia the czar and his entourage abetted the Black Hundreds and the other pogromchiks, and the Okhrana, the secret police, concocted the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, still potent for evil. But in that Russia the Jews, beset by hostility and hardship, doubt and division, were nevertheless not kept from living a communal and cultural life unsurpassed anywhere, before or since, for variety, intensity, and achievement, from the most traditional to the most revolutionary, in Yiddish, Russian, and Hebrew. And the Jews of the czar's empire could leave. In their many hundreds of thousands they did leave, a few to prepare the way for the state of Israel and more to become the parents and grandparents of most Jews in the English-speaking countries and Latin America today. The anti-Christian Russia of Stalin and his legatees almost makes the czar's Christian Russia look good.

Later on a man told me that I had persuaded some minds but no hearts, because people are not stirred by a demonstration that something is less bad than something else. Besides, he said, the new, anti-Christian anti-Semites are hypocritical. They denounce their quarry not as Jews but as Zionists or rootless cosmopolitans, and somehow they benefit from their hypocrisy. Not so the old, Christian ones. Remember Admiral Horthy, regent of Hungary between the wars, unfriendly to the Nazis. After World War I, when the Young Men's Christian Association sent a relief mission from America to Hungary, Horthy shook the YMCA representative's hand and said, "Glad to meet a fellow anti-Semite." More often than not the word Christian —*christlich, chrétien*—in the name of a European movement or party meant anti-Semitic.

The man speaking to me had been young in Poland in the 30's. He said that while he could not deny anti-Christian anti-Semitism, for him only Christian anti-Semitism was real: Jewish benches in the universities, and assaults by the student anti-Semites, and frightened alertness in the Easter season. He was a teacher and did not fail to tell his students what he had seen and experienced.

VIII

LOYAL children of the Enlightenment think that irreligion's ideas are good, so they are slow to admit that its deeds can be bad. As Marxists and *marxisants* can say that the Soviet Union is not truly socialist, so they will say that true Marxism/socialism cannot be anti-Semitic, that it has not failed but has never been tried. (G.K. Chesterton said that Christianity had not failed, it had never been tried.) Do Marx's own words convict him of being a foul-mouthed anti-Semite and racist? Ignore it, deny it, explain it away. ("Newton may have been loony about the numbers in the Book of Daniel, but he was a great genius anyway.") Does George L. Mosse's meticulous examination of the evidence prove that "revolutionary socialism desired to put an end to Jews and Judaism"? Ignore it, deny it, explain it away. Do leftists, in pain, report anti-Semitism on the Left? Forget it. By definition, enemies must be on the Right, the political and above all the religious Right.

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Liberals can exhibit a similar tropism. For many American Jews the enemy is the Moral Majority, never mind that it is pro-Israel and that its morality is close to traditional Jewish morality. Though some may have a less than unshakable faith in prayer—or, for that matter, in God—few things give them greater pleasure than the chance to express righteous indignation when an old-fashioned fundamentalist blurts out that God does not listen to the prayer of a Jew. Probably that fundamentalist is an unreconstructed upholder of a classical Christian doctrine, no salvation outside the Church (or Matthew's ". . . no one knows the Father except the Son, and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him"). Probably he would say about the prayer of a Muslim—or a Catholic?—what he said about the prayer of a Jew. That does not matter. He has furnished an excuse for continuing to locate danger in Christianity, especially the Christian Right.

Devotees of "liberation" theology, and most conspicuously the World Council of Churches, are pro-Third World (except Afghanistan), pro-PLO, anti-West, anti-Israel. In France the esteemed Catholic journal *Esprit*, highbrow and leftist, faults Rome for being backward about pretty nearly everything, with one exception. Because *Esprit* hates Israel, it faults Vatican II for being soft on Judaism. About Shatila and Sabra the prevailing tone was, "What can you expect of people whose religion is Judaism?" We are not to suppose that *Esprit* is bigoted, or anti-Semitic. It has great respect for Islam, and Arabs are Semites too, aren't they?

Perhaps we should think of such people rather as Christian leftists than as leftist Christians, because the common element in anti-Israel/anti-Jewish animus has long been not Christianity but leftism. As in the 30's, when the farcical Red Dean of Canterbury flabbergasted even the cynic who was the Soviet ambassador in London by asking him to convey to Moscow the Dean's felicitations on Stalin's splendid victory at the polls, so today, Christian leftists—and Jewish ones—are fellow-travelers of anti-Christian leftists, far more powerful and numerous.

IX

Let me summarize, fill in some lacunae, and draw some conclusions.

- Hitler made the Holocaust because he wanted to make it. Anti-Semitism did not make him make it.
- Hitler was ex-Christian and anti-Christian.
- There was much and there remains some Christian anti-Semitism. Hitler's anti-Semitism was anti-Christian.
- Marxist anti-Semitism also is anti-Christian.
- Anti-Christian anti-Semitism is descended ideologically from pagan disdain for Judaism and the Jews, and emotionally from Christian hatred of Judaism and the Jews.
- In Hitler's time the world capital of anti-Semitism was Berlin. Since then it has been Moscow.
- Jews now have more to fear from anti-Christians than from Christians, and from the Christian Left than from the Christian Right.

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What We Now Know About China

Nick Eberstadt

THE late 1970's and early 1980's were, quite literally, a time of self-discovery in China. From the 1949 liberation onward, China's Communist leaders had striven to secure unchallengeable power to transform the society beneath them, but they had not shown the same steady interest in familiarizing themselves with the problems and needs of the populace whose lives they intended to transform. As a result, ambitious and delicate "social experiments" were routinely performed with very little knowledge of the conditions, or even the specific afflictions, of the hundreds of millions of patients in question.

As one might expect, this approach to "planning" exacted a high human toll: Chinese officials now say, for example, that over *10 million* people died of hunger in the wake of the "Great Leap Forward" of 1958–59, and nonofficial estimates by Western scholars run much higher. From the standpoint of the socialist technocrats, perhaps no less shameful was the fact that this kind of "scientific socialism" left the Chinese state apparatus backward and weak. In 1978, frightened by how little they had inherited from their Maoist legators and worried by an increasingly menacing international situation, the group that rose to power with Deng Xiaoping sought to bring events more fully under its command through a campaign of "truth from facts." Like previous Communist Chinese campaigns, this one involved a massive settling of old scores. What set it apart from the two decades of campaigns before it was its nominal goal: learning about the condition of the Chinese people.

Statisticians and academic experts, long considered suspect "bourgeois elements," were rehabilitated and set to work mapping out the nation's social and economic problems; a general documentation of past policy failures was systematically assembled; and a tactical "opening" to the West was effected, through which technicians and know-how might be made to pass. In these early years of the post-Mao "readjustment," it did not serve the purposes of China's new directorate to keep its findings completely out of the public domain; nor would this have been fully possible. Thus, as the new leaders educated themselves about their nation, they also let escape to the West substantially more information about everyday life in modern China than had previously been available. A new body of scholarly literature has taken life from these revelations.

The most eagerly awaited of the new books on life in People's China is without doubt Steven W. Mosher's *Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese.** Even before the book appeared, Mosher had become a *cause célèbre*: an issue in U.S.-China relations, and a focal point for arguments about academic freedom and scholarly responsibilities. The Mosher case is highly involved and still only partly a matter of public record; only the briefest exposition of its outlines (upon which Mosher and his detractors often disagree) can be given here.

In 1979, at the height of "truth from facts" fervor and just after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China, Mosher was awarded a highly coveted Committee on Scholarly Communications (CSC) fellowship to live in and study his then-wife's native village in Guangdong province. Mosher had been a star student in anthropology at Stanford University, and by all accounts was a tireless and highly resourceful investigator of Chinese life during his year-long research visit. The Chinese government lodged no complaints against Mosher at any point during his stay, but when he began writing up, and publishing, his findings, a far-reaching and relentless campaign to discredit and punish him seems to have been launched. In meetings with Western scholars, Chinese diplomats and scholars would almost invariably bring up the "Mosher incident" and fix upon it, denouncing the man and lecturing their guests on his alleged transgressions. Mosher was—unofficially—accused of bribing local cadres, profiting from graft, smuggling gold and art work out of the country, living with prostitutes in his study village, and other violations of scholarly mores and Chinese law.

At the crescendo of this campaign, Chinese officials directly threatened an executive director of

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the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), one of CSC's sponsors, that American scholars' access to China would be "reexamined" if the Mosher case were not "resolved." The impact of such threats is unclear: Mosher and Stanford give substantially different accounts of subsequent events. After the start of the anti-Mosher campaign, however, two of Mosher's advisers resigned from his doctoral committee—a highly unusual circumstance in academia—and the Stanford anthropology department began an investigation of Mosher's ethical conduct. After several months of deliberation, the department voted unanimously to expel Mosher. No student in the department had ever been punished so severely.

With much yet to be released, including the faculty report upon which Mosher's expulsion was presumably based, it is too early to comment conclusively on the incident. It seems that Stanford's anthropology faculty believes Mosher was duplicitous in his dealings *with them*. On the other hand, what seems equally clear at this point is that neither the SSRC, the quasi-governmental sponsor of so much research in the social sciences, nor Stanford University made any great effort to protect or support a young scholar who had come under attack from a government which explicitly rejects the principles both of free speech and of academic freedom. (Since relations with the United States are a topic of great sensitivity in Peking, it seems reasonable to assume that the campaign against Mosher could only have been approved at a fairly high level.) In China, men who "know too much" can be purged without much ado; it would be a disturbing reflection on the American educational system if Chinese cadres were to learn that they could count on scholars in this country to do their punishing and disgracing for them.

Broken Earth: The Rural Chinese is Mosher's testimony of what he saw during his fateful year in China. There is much in this volume which the men in Peking would surely rather not see in print. Mosher writes that the peasants in Sandhead Brigade (village), his temporary home, have come to terms with socialism by circumventing its rules as best they can, much as peasants before them responded to capricious or inexplicable edicts from their emperors. Peasants saved their strength (and their nightsoil) in their obligatory hours in the communal fields, hurrying home to do real work on their private plots. In a system where cadres could award benefits and privileges without even a passing nod to merit, corruption was endemic, and many peasants seemed to have honed the buying of favors down to a science. Local cadres, faced with the options of accomplishing the impossible or incurring wrath from on high, had grown adept at doctoring reports and numbers to please their higher-ups; Mosher mentions one brigade which actually hired educated peasants from nearby communes to take local tests so they could "prove" they had totally eliminated illiteracy.

Not all rules, however, could be dodged or twisted to advantage. While the Chinese government bureaucracy that Mosher saw was often lost in torpor, it was periodically energized by marching orders from Peking that required it to reach into peasants' lives and shake them to their foundations. During these periods there was no hope of escaping the directives of the state, even though these might have disastrous consequences. Mosher was in China at the start of a population-control campaign. The Deng group had decided that its modernization program was being threatened by "excessive" childbearing in the provinces (the role of the government in depressing the production of food or restricting the expansion of consumer industries was not a subject for public discussion). Even as agricultural policy was changing to make peasants more dependent on the labor of their family, a second set of orders was suggesting that parents limit their families to a single child (the so-called "one-child norm").

Mosher describes what these orders meant in practice for the women of Sandhead. All who had already borne their "quota" of babies were brought into commune headquarters for a meeting with top commune cadres and party members:

> From Sandhead Brigade there were eighteen women, all from five- to nine-months pregnant, and many red-eyed from lack of sleep and crying. They sat listlessly on short plank benches in a semicircle about the front of the room, where He Kaifeng [a top cadre and party member] explained the purpose of the meeting in no uncertain terms. "You are here because you have yet to 'think clear' about birth control, and you will remain here until you do." . . . Looking coldly around the room, he said slowly and deliberately, "None of you has any choice in this matter. . . ." Then, visually calculating how far along the women in the room were, he went on to add, "The two of you who are eight or nine months pregnant will have a Caesarean; the rest of you will have a shot which will cause you to abort."

Later, Mosher visited the commune health center where these "voluntary" abortions were being performed:

> [One woman], already looking beyond a present in which she had been given an injection of what she called "poison," . . . seemed under the circumstances to be bearing up amazingly well. The woman in the far bed was clearly in much worse shape. Her swollen and blood-flecked eyes . . . took no notice of my presence. . . . I thought at first that she was under medication for pain, but the woman's work cadre informed me that, aside from the "poison shot," she had received no medicine. . . . Nevertheless, the cadre hastened to add, the woman was not in any pain.

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There was more. Mosher reports of a woman who was given the "poison shot" *after* she had begun labor, and tells the heart-rending story of a would-be mother who had been successful in concealing her pregnancy from the authorities almost until the end:

> "They are so strict now," she continued, tears welling up. "I just want to have this one more baby, and then I'll be glad to have a tubal ligation. In the village there is no way to survive if you don't have a son." . . . She was sobbing heavily by this time. . . . "I will agree to anything they want if they only let me have my baby."

Scenes like these, replicated by the hundreds of thousands, appear to be the human essence of the current Chinese "family-planning" campaign. Although this campaign may seem especially horrifying to foreigners, Mosher argues that it is neither more arbitrary nor more cruel than dozens of other campaigns that have been forced forward in China since the liberation. Indeed, Mosher's conversations with adults who lived through the Cultural Revolution suggest that part of the price of growing up in modern China is coming to expect, and preparing to endure, recurrent periods of state-inflicted suffering.

Few Westerners have seen what Mosher was able to see, and fewer still have had the courage to make their observations public. On these grounds alone *Broken Earth* is assured a place as an important book. Nevertheless, it is not without shortcomings. Mosher is clearly convinced that life in China today is worse than before the liberation; in his final chapter, however, he attempts to convince us of this through the nostalgic reminiscences of the old folks in Sandhead village. Of all people, an anthropologist should be aware that respondents' casual recollections are a highly imperfect means of documenting the past. If life in fact was better under Chiang Kai-shek, the warlords, and the Japanese expeditionary army than it is today, there should be a more persuasive and comprehensive way of showing it.

There are other difficulties with Mosher's approach. At more than one point it appears that Mosher, who is fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin, is not above stretching a translation to fit whatever point he is trying to make. And he has a peculiar habit of winking through the typewriter at his readers, as if there were things he wished he could tell us, but cannot. There may indeed be reasons for Mosher to keep many of his best stories to himself, if only to protect the villagers in Sandhead. Yet his coyness does not serve the cause of clear exposition, nor does it bolster his assertion that an anthropologist on location in a Chinese village can tell us vastly more about Chinese life than a reporter locked up in a hotel in Peking. Fox Butterfield (*China: Alive in the Bitter Sea*), Richard Bernstein (*From the Center of the Earth: The Search for the Truth About China*), and Jay and Linda Mathews (*One Billion: A China Chronicle*) have all recently written reports based on their experience in China; paradoxically, though these journalists had much less access to "real life" within China than did Mosher, they seem generally more informative about it, and at times even appear to do a better job of conveying its flavor.

As it happens, recent revelations in the Chinese press and scholarly journals have made it possible to paint fascinating pictures of life in modern China without ever setting foot in the country, as two recent works demonstrate. The first is *The Bad Earth: Environmental Degradation in China*, by Vaclav Smil.* Smil, a Czech émigré now teaching in Canada, has laid to rest forever the vision of China as a low-tech ecological paradise. His masterful study, relying almost exclusively on Chinese-language materials, demonstrates that China's path to development has been followed at the cost of serious environmental disruption. Past policies, he suggests, have caused considerably more pollution than one would expect in a poor country that is on its way to industrializing.

Smil is not an environmentalist hysteric: he seems to have no philosophical problems with harnessing nature to serve man's needs. His ecological objections are to inefficient, impractical, or self-defeating policies, and if his account is correct, these have been the rule rather than the exception in China since the liberation.

For much of the past generation, for example, China has pursued the line of "taking grain as the key link" in the rural economy. In practice, this has meant converting forest, hillside, and pasture-land into rice paddies and wheat fields, irrespective of the consequences for the local environment, or even for the production of food. According to Chinese scholars, the single-minded preoccupation with grain did not lead to an expansion of arable acreage. Available farmland appears to have declined since the liberation: what overplanting has added to production, resultant erosion and desertification have more than taken away. Despite highly vaunted reforestation programs, China's afforested area has apparently shrunk by more than a third since the early 1950's; with mountains and hillsides correspondingly less capable of retaining water, cycles of drought and flooding have become an increasing plague upon the Chinese farmer.

Smil notes that about a fifth of China's farmland was stricken each year by floods in the early 1950's; today the fraction is said to be closer to a third. In the centuries before the Revolution, southerly Yunnan province experienced serious flooding about once a decade; today the cycle of

* M. E. Sharpe, 247 pp., $25.00.

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disaster recurs every three years. In the arid north, the fragile environment appears to have been even more seriously destabilized. The agricultural outskirts of Peking, which were hit by an average of three sandstorm days a year in the early 1950's, were seeing twenty-six sandstorm days a year by the late 1970's. In Inner Mongolia, overgrazing and overfarming led to a steady decline of agricultural production in the 1970's. And by 1978, Smil notes, Chinese agricultural experts were writing that "production levels and living standards of the masses in quite a number of places are still lower than during the early post-liberation period or *during the War of Resistance against Japan*" (emphasis added). It is only when one considers the magnitude of the disruptions attendant on that all-out war that the meaning of these words can be fully appreciated.

Agricultural problems seem often to have been compounded rather than relieved through the state's use of water resources. The Chinese government seems to have a penchant for giant irrigation and flood-control projects; unfortunately, many of these, like the enormous Sanmenxia reservoir on the Yellow River, turn into useless basins of silt through poor planning and mismanagement, squandering water in the nation's thirsty regions in the process. Smil argues that prudent water management at the local level could meet the needs of China's fields, factories, and families, but the government seems to prefer to solve water problems through constructing new projects, and pays little attention to maintaining, let alone upgrading, the projects it has already completed.

Inattention to water pollution has also left its mark on the People's Republic. By 1978, China's inland fish catch was only half as great as in 1954. The same water that kills the fish must be consumed by the people. Over 90 percent of the waste water from the cities, Chinese authorities report, is totally untreated. This might lead to problems when a main city sewage grate is located forty meters upstream from a main intake duct for drinking water, as it is in Shanghai. Due in part to the diversion of river water to inefficient irrigation projects in the country, the ratio of sewage water to fresh water in Shanghai's Huangpu River during the summer months has been dropping in recent years: by the 1970's, the mix at the drinking taps was six parts fresh water, one part sewage; during the drought of 1979 it fell briefly to one-to-one. If the Huangpu looks to be a public-health hazard, the Ba River of Peking may not be far behind: it caught fire and blazed out of control in late 1979.

Air pollution has also proved to be a serious problem in modern China, and not only from the standpoint of aesthetics. China's industries, motor vehicles, and homes appear to be flagrantly inefficient users of fuel. The magnitude of the waste is suggested by Smil's estimate that reaching Western (i.e., U.S.) levels of energy efficiency *in industry alone* would save China the equivalent of 60 million tons of coal a year. The World Bank is now suggesting that China burns twice as much fuel per unit of economic output as the United States, and nearly half again as much as India.

A poor nation can ill afford such reckless use of scarce resources. Chinese officials have stated that 500 million of China's 800 million rural residents suffer from "serious" shortage of fuels for three to five months a year. Deprived of the wherewithal to warm their homes and their food by the profligacy of industry, they must get by as best they can: stripping trees, cutting up turf, and otherwise undermining the productive base of the soil which must sustain them.

Environmental degradation is hardly unique to China. But it may be more difficult to reverse the process in China than in other less-developed countries. In China's planned economy, prices are not intended to reflect market scarcities. There may be little financial incentive, or pressure, for factories to consume less energy, or for communes to use water more carefully. In China's monolithic political system, moreover, it is difficult—and risky—for groups which suffer from pollution to stand in opposition to policies officially embraced. If China is to escape from the net of environmental troubles it has cast over itself since the liberation, Smil concludes, it will only be through a radical and sustained redirection of priorities from the very top.

THE extent to which China's leadership has trapped itself in problems of its own making is also a theme running through Nicholas R. Lardy's *Agriculture in China's Modern Economic Development*.* This superb study, based on a painstaking analysis of Chinese reports on agriculture and industry, is easily the best book on China's food economy in fifteen years. A short volume, it provides not only a history of Chinese agriculture since the onset of "planning," but the best explanation to date of the mechanics of the system that must feed a billion people, and of the effects a generation of revolutionary management has had on its ability to function.

The agricultural system the Chinese Communist party inherited, writes Lardy, is reputed to have been primitive and subsistence-oriented; in fact, though it did have many failings, these were not among them. Though battered by almost twenty years of war and civil disorder, China's farm economy was specialized and complex, with over half of all farm produce finding its way to eventual users through a dynamic network of markets. The revolutionaries who came to power after 1949 attributed the social ills of the old rural China in no small part to the markets themselves, and to the

* Cambridge University Press, 285 pp., $37.50.

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competitive forces which propelled them. After overturning rural society through land reform, they resolved to improve the rural economy by freeing it, to the maximum extent feasible, of marketing infrastructure and independently determined prices.

These reforms had unanticipated consequences. By forcing agriculture to be less commercialized, Chinese authorities necessarily backed farmers into unnatural patterns of subsistence production. "Self-sufficiency" turned out to mean that farmers could not produce what they were best at, and thus led to rising costs of production and declining efficiency in a nation which desperately wanted more food. As Lardy writes, "Self-sufficiency was a chimerical goal except to the extent that it could be achieved by reductions in consumption and income."

Distrust of markets, for its part, unavoidably resulted in a diminished capacity to cope with the disasters which regularly befell the Chinese countryside. By 1978, for example, interprovincial transfers of grain had fallen to one-tenth of a percent of national output—a considerably lower fraction than had been achieved in the 17th century. As a practical matter, such a meager volume of trade could not provide for relief operations for even one stricken province: needy and desperate regions had in effect been cut off from those who might help them in times of hardship.

Although slogans like "agriculture first" implied that the development of the countryside ranked high in the hierarchy of official concerns, Lardy argues that economic policies proved otherwise. Much as the government reversed itself on other matters, it held steady in keeping farm prices low and the prices of farmers' necessities unnaturally high; moreover, the government budget consistently denied the farm sector an economically rational share of national investment funds. Since the mid-1950's, Lardy claims, agriculture has been soaked to build industry, but the industrial structure that has been erected through these regressive transfers is highly inefficient, in effect dependent for its future growth upon continued uneconomic transfer of resources from countryside to city. The process has seriously distorted the entire Chinese economy. "China is probably the only country in modern times," he concludes, "to combine, over twenty years, a doubling of real per-capita income and a constant or even slightly declining average food consumption."

In human terms, Lardy writes, socialist reconstruction of the countryside appears to have been a mixed blessing even for the poor and the hungry. While land reform and the redistributionist policies of the early 1950's incontestably improved the diet of many disadvantaged groups, this appears to have been a once-only gain. "Tentatively," Lardy reports, "it would appear that two decades of collectivized agriculture failed to raise, and may even have reduced, the level of consumption of the poorest quintile [fifth] of China's population." For the nation as a whole, there seems to have been a deterioration in both quantity and quality of foods between the late 1950's and the late 1970's. As one observer has noted, "grain first" worked out in practice to mean "grain only"; per-capita grain availability failed to rise, and consumption of the more highly valued foods—vegetable oil, sugar, vegetables, fruit, fish—all went into decline.

If food availability did not grow over these years, inequality in distribution did. According to Chinese sources, per-capita grain availability fell in the countryside by 6 percent between 1957 and 1978; yet it rose by over 10 percent in the cities. Vegetable oil—indispensable to Chinese cooking—dropped by 9 percent over those same years in the cities, but by 43 percent in the rural regions. China's cities have become enclaves of nutritional privilege; their protected status is insured by laws that prohibit country people from traveling to town except under specific and highly restricted circumstances.

Since 1978, China's planners have relaxed some of the rules against rural markets, and have moved to bring agricultural prices more in line with production costs. Agricultural production has responded vigorously to these reforms, but Lardy warns that there may be sharp limits to how much further this regime can "liberalize" its agricultural policies. Since urban food prices are heavily subsidized, raising prices for farmers "would require even larger subsidies for the Ministry of Food that would come at the expense of other government expenditures. That constraint inhibits setting rational farm-level prices and increasing the commercialization of Chinese farming."

But the pressures to return to previous policies do not emanate solely from the budget. Regardless of the sentiments Westerners may choose to ascribe to it, the entire spectrum of leaders high in modern China appears to have a fundamental distrust of policies that remove choices from its immediate grasp. Punitive, even catastrophic, farm policies of the past cannot be written off as aberrations on the learning curve. Lardy writes:

> Policy appears to reflect a consensual process, not the dictates of one man or small group. . . . The fundamental shortcomings of agricultural development policy stem not from the Cultural Revolution, when the so-called leftists were in ascendancy. They stem rather from the introduction of compulsory procurements of farm products in the fall of 1953 and the collectivization of agriculture in 1955–56. . . . In some periods party intervention was moderate . . . but the use of price incentives rather than direct control always has had consequences that have proven un-

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acceptable to China's ruling coalition, whatever its composition. That coalition proclaims frequently its affinity for the peasantry but, except for brief interludes, has adopted policies that promote urban and industrial development, even at the expense of the vast majority.

IF THE new literature on China answers many questions about the well-being of the Chinese people under three decades of radical social experimentation, it should also raise a number of questions here in the United States. In a society like ours, where information carries certain moral obligations, revelations of the distress of broad segments of the Chinese population—much of it caused by policies deliberately undertaken by a continuum of governmental leaders—raises the issue of what the proper American attitude toward the Chinese state should be. At present, for example, the United States is spending over $10 million, through United Nations conduits, to fund "population activities" in China—presumably efforts not too different from the ones that Steven Mosher witnessed in 1979. China is lobbying for a substantial increase in development assistance from the World Bank so that it might, among other things, undertake new water-works projects and strengthen its "agricultural-management infrastructure"; the United States is reportedly considering underwriting the request. Last, but certainly not least, the Reagan administration appears to have entangled itself in a commitment to shut off the sale of defensive weapons to Taiwan, and may be on the verge of an even more significant strategic decision, which would include the provision of military and nuclear technology to the Mainland.

The new literature on China should leave little doubt in our own minds about the credibility of our nation's commitment to human rights if we should press forward in this relationship. There is, after all, an old Occidental adage that you can judge people by the friends they choose.

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The Decline and Fall of Literary Criticism

Robert Alter

THE decline of literary criticism, an intellectual activity not so long ago thought of as culturally significant in America and England, has often been noted. What deserves more attention is the peculiar relation between the rise of theory and the fall of criticism. A generation ago, people involved in Anglo-American literary studies scarcely knew that literary theory existed. René Wellek's and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1949) was the first book in English to bear such a title, and this hitherto alien enterprise of describing how literature works as a system would not have been undertaken without the presence at Yale of Wellek, a Czech émigré with a satchelful of European ideas.

In those innocent days, departments of literature were pigeonholed, like the old roll-top desks their members often used, into neat little slots containing 17th-century men, 18th-century men, and so forth (there were hardly any women then). You did your dutiful spadework on and around "your" authors—or, if you were a critic addressing a less specialized audience, like Lionel Trilling and Edmund Wilson in this country or F.R. Leavis in England, you made your pronouncements on the writer and society, literature and history—without puzzling your head about the dynamics of reader response, the nature of convention, the formation of literary canons, linguistics, and interpretive strategies.

How much things have changed in the three-and-a-half decades since the publication of *Theory of Literature* was vividly illustrated by a symposium called "Professing Literature" that appeared a little over a year ago in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* (December 10, 1982). The symposium was occasioned by, and variously reflected, a much discussed feeling of recent years that literary studies—referred to as "English" on the other side of the water—were in a state of crisis. The symposiasts, including both Americans and Englishmen as well as one Australian, sharply split between those who believed that the addiction to theory was destroying "English," or at any rate was the clearest symptom of its collapse, and those who argued that only theory could save the study of literature. Interestingly, René Wellek himself stood squarely on the anti-theoretical side of the barricades, complaining that young scholars now were too often being exposed chiefly to theory rather than to the primary literary texts, and objecting to fashionable theories (he clearly had in mind deconstruction, whose American capital is his own Yale) which "deny that there is correct interpretation and hence encourage sheer caprice, arbitrariness, and finally anarchy."

Before speculating on the reasons for this hullabaloo about theory, let me hasten to distinguish between the intrinsic value of the activity and what has happened to it in becoming a vogue. For all the achievements of the conventional, sturdily commonsensical tradition of literary criticism in England and America, one must admit that on the whole it exhibited a singular lack of curiosity about the conceptual underpinnings of literature and interpretation. This absence of methodological self-scrutiny or philosophical reflection could lead to certain fundamental simplifications even on the part of acute thinkers, ranging from the New Critics' celebration of the sublime semantic unity of the poetic artifact to Leavis's *ex-cathedra* assertions about the presence of Seriousness and Life in a drastically select group of literary texts. To the extent that the new wave of interest in literary theory has opened minds to examine the problematics of literary expression as such, of reading, and of the systematic investigation of literature, it must be welcomed as a way of introducing new rigor, complexity, and fullness to the institutional study of literature.

In the actual surge of the vogue, however, the problem of the balance of emphases to which Wellek alludes is a very real one: it is by no means uncommon these days to meet people with Ph.D.'s in literature who have read every inscrutable word of the psychoanalytic-linguistic theorist Jacques Lacan but whose acquaintance with Balzac is limited to *Le Père Goriot* and "Sarrasine," the story quoted by Roland Barthes in his eccentric semiotic study, *S-Z*. In any case, what concerns me here is not the practical issue of striking a balance in graduate training but the motives that impel those who began as students of literature to turn in such num-

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bers from the stuff of literature to the sundry contemporary metalanguages that have been devised to talk about talking about literature.

To begin with, this eagerness for a whole new set of terms that can be maneuvered around and behind and beyond literature has the look of a program of system-wide retooling in an industry that has discovered it is antiquated. I borrow this sad technological metaphor from a *TLS* review by David Lodge of Tony Tanner's *Adultery and the Novel* (1979), a book Lodge extravagantly overpraises for its author's plunge from the surface world of British literary chitchat into the profundities of post-structuralism. (Lodge himself had made the plunge earlier, moving from a lucid 1966 study, *Language of Fiction*, to *The Modes of Modern Writing*, 1977, where he persuaded himself that Roman Jakobson's much overworked distinction between metaphor and metonymy could be made a lever to lift all the world of modern fiction.) Perhaps the very proliferation of academic institutions in the first two postwar decades led to a sense that the élan of criticism when it was an elite activity could not be preserved, that in the mushrooming of articles and journals and university-press publications, one must abandon the hope of producing still another "perceptive" reading of *Middlemarch* and find radically new ways of approaching, or angling away from, literary texts. Add to that a certain Anglo-American cultural inferiority complex in the later postwar period: Englishmen and Americans, it was felt, were somehow not keeping pace with the best of the new Continental thought, were still producing the intellectual equivalents, of chugging Morris Minors and rumbling Buicks while the Europeans were devising miracles of engineering like the BMW and the Citroën. Instructively, literary theory after a decade and a half in fashion remains a European import. No American or English theorist has attained half the stature or a quarter the influence of Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Gérard Genette, Michel Foucault, or, to cross the Rhine, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss; and Roman Jakobson, though he taught for decades at MIT, was, like Wellek, an immigrant bringing his intellectual baggage from Russia and Czechoslovakia.

This fascination with Continental horizons, at least for American literary scholars, was probably reinforced by the disruptive politicization of the university during the Vietnam era. As students occupied administration buildings and blue clouds of tear gas wafted over once tranquil quadrangles, many thought they were discovering that literature was not in the least "relevant," as the New York critics associated with *Partisan Review* had led them to hope, or even a viable refuge in beauty from history, as the New Critics had encouraged them to imagine. At this point, there was an understandable appeal in Continental doctrines that categorically denied the privileged status of literary discourse, or, alternatively, that rediscovered the nexus between literature and society, literature and history, at a higher level of analysis than that of the essayistic Anglo-American critics.

Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction** has been something of a university-bookstore bestseller this year and as such is surely a sign of the times. It has the double advantage of providing a skillful, often incisive survey of the theoretical scene while symptomatically reflecting both of the post-60's aspirations I have just noted—to deny the distinctiveness of literature among modes of discourse, and to expose the hidden ligaments binding literature to society and to the political realm.

In most respects, *Literary Theory* is a surprisingly cogent and well-written book. Surprising, that is, to anyone who has read Eagleton's previous books, like *Literature and Ideology* and *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, which are reductive in their Marxist insistences and so top-heavy with jargon and abstractions that one might wonder if the author was a native speaker of English. In refreshing contrast, Eagleton's prose in *Literary Theory* is lucid, lively, at times witty or even breezily conversational; and his Marxism actually gives him, as I shall explain, a certain leverage on the theorists he discusses, so that one is almost prepared to brush aside little stylistic tics like his repeated use of "liberal humanism" and "late capitalism" as ultimate terms of opprobrium or his summing up one theorist after another by concluding that so-and-so failed to recognize that his solution was part of the problem.

I don't pretend to know what it was that liberated Terry Eagleton from the chains of British New Left rhetoric when he sat down to write this book, but I would like to suggest that in general it may be easier to be sharp and brisk when you are exposing the underlying fallacies of theories than when you are writing about either critics or literature itself. (It is probably "no accident" that the weakest section of *Literary Theory* before its concluding chapter is when Eagleton turns from theorists to a text, trying to provide an illustrative psychoanalytic reading of *Sons and Lovers*.) That is, when you write about a great novel or poem or play, you have to contend, drawing on your own limited resources and orientation, with the terrific semantic density of the literary text, and in critical controversy, if you are debating, say, Cleanth Brooks's reading of a poem by Donne, you must address yourself both to the inherent intricacies of the text and to the operations of a mind which, however misguided in your view, has scrutinized the text with considerable subtlety. By contrast, when you are discussing the shortcomings of a par-

* University of Minnesota Press, 244 pp., $29.50.

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ticular theoretical approach, which as theory offers a global account of literature and literary interpretation based on limited, perhaps narrow or even doctrinaire assumptions, it is rather easier to make telling points, unmasking pretensions and exposing absurdities.

This leads me to conclude that current debates over theory provide more congenial occasions for the intellectual expression of aggression than the controversies of the vanished era of criticism, when the struggles were over questions like whether Milton was a baleful or beneficent influence on English poetry. Here, for example, is Eagleton, in a fairly characteristic moment, complaining about the relentlessness with which deconstruction makes literature "testify to the impossibility of language's ever doing more than talk about its own failure, like some barroom bore." The dissolution of meaning then becomes the key to an academic game:

> For you can be sure that if your own critical account of a text has left the tiniest grains of "positive" meaning within its folds, somebody else will come along and deconstruct you in turn. Such deconstruction is a power-game, a mirror-image of orthodox academic competition. It is just that now, in a religious twist to the old ideology, victory is achieved by *kenosis* or self-emptying: the winner is the one who has managed to get rid of all his cards and sit with empty hands.

The satiric liveliness of the prose is suited to, and perhaps inspired by, the subject, while the cutting edge of the critique is the concept of ideology, which appears explicitly here, as it does in scores of related passages in the book, just when the writer is introducing his most telling point. As a Marxist, Eagleton is acutely aware that no intellectual activity, however self-enclosed it may seem or claim to be, is really innocent; that what you teach, the way you write, what you consider literature to be, are inevitably bound up with encompassing systems of value and ultimately reflect in some fashion the distribution and exercise of power in the larger political realm.

THE great methodological trap for Marxists in this mode is an overspecification of the nexus between literary movements and political attitudes or historical events, and Eagleton is sometimes guilty of this. Thus, he claims that "post-structuralism"—which means chiefly, though not exclusively, deconstruction—was a direct consequence of the Paris *événements* of May 1968: "Unable to break the structures of state power, post-structuralism found it possible instead to subvert the structures of language. . . . The student movement was flushed off the streets and driven underground into discourse." This sounds clever, but it glides over various untidy details like the fact that the two seminal volumes of the movement by Derrida were published and enthusiastically received in 1967, that the movement was created by elder statesmen of French intellectual life, not students, and that it has flourished most abundantly in New Haven and Baltimore and Ithaca, among literary scholars quite untouched by the political upheavals in Paris in May 1968.

Fortunately, such moments of overspecification are a good deal less frequent than one might have feared, and Eagleton's analysis is often quite bracing in laying bare the ideological implications of attitudes toward literature. He makes a convincing case for the idea that "English" was invented as an academic subject in the 19th century to serve as a substitute religion and a basis for solidarity in a society actually tense with class conflict and haunted by the specter of social alienation. (George Gordon, an early 20th-century professor of English at Oxford whom Eagleton quotes, baldly announced that "England is sick, and . . . English literature must save it.") This ideologized notion of literature begins preeminently with Matthew Arnold, who in turn draws on the redemptive vision of poetry spun out of the romantic movement. One could say that Eagleton's most basic critique of the various currents of modern literary theory, especially as they have wound their way through England and America, is that they have extended this early modern cult of literature as refuge and salvation, or alternately have mimicked the technocratic and managerial procedures of an alienating modern society—swinging between the Charybdis of aestheticism and the Scylla of scientism.

The critics of the 30's and 40's grouped around F.R. Leavis's *Scrutiny* in England and the contemporaneous New Critics in America are both said to reflect "the ideology of an uprooted, defensive intelligentsia who reinvented in literature what they could not locate in reality." And for the New Criticism in particular, with its Southern Agrarian base, "poetry was the new religion, a nostalgic haven from the alienations of industrial capitalism." Structuralism is in most respects the chief representative of the scientistic alternative to such aestheticism, replacing in its analysis of literature all the old-fashioned human subjects with a new subject—"the *system itself*, which seemed equipped with all the attributes (autonomy, self-correction, unity, and so on) of the traditional individual." Ingeniously, but I think persuasively, Eagleton proposes that Northrop Frye, whose 1957 *Anatomy of Criticism* was the early trailblazer for the North American interest in theory, unites both ideological trends: "The beauty of [his] approach is that it deftly combines an extreme aestheticism with an efficiently classifying 'scientificity,' and so maintains literature as an imaginative alternative to society while rendering criticism respectable in that society's [technocratic] terms."

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SINCE so much of Eagleton's analysis is devoted to exposing the escapism and self-delusions of literary theory, the various ways it spins its wheels while pretending to go somewhere, one may wonder what point he sees in the whole enterprise. *Literary Theory* is very much a weathervane for prevailing intellectual winds in deriving from its survey of contemporary theorists two leading ideas: the destruction of the illusion of realism and the destruction of the illusion of literary tradition.

Back in the heyday of *Partisan Review* in the 40's and early 50's, it was often asserted that the novel "brought us the news" about our society, that a reading of *The Princess Casamassima* or *The Charterhouse of Parma* could cast a uniquely penetrating light on the fine workings of both human nature and of the sundry political and social frameworks that encompass it. In the post-Vietnam era, this notion was widely dismissed as a naive reflectionist fallacy, perhaps for some critics because of a wounded sense that their faith in literature had been misplaced. Literature was increasingly thought of not as a mirror held to nature but as an agent of society, in covert complicity with it even when seeming to be its overt critic. Eagleton approvingly summarizes the influential view of Barthes on this issue (and I suspect that Foucault is hovering somewhere behind the summary):

> Signs which pass themselves off as natural, which offer themselves as the only conceivable way of viewing the world, are by that token authoritarian and ideological. It is one of the functions of ideology to "naturalize" social reality, to make it seem as innocent and unchangeable as Nature itself. Ideology seeks to convert culture into Nature, and the "natural" sign is one of its weapons. . . . In the ideology of realism, words are felt to link up with their thought or objects in essentially right and uncontrovertible ways.

This is a central emphasis in most of the fashionable French theorists. It can be detected in the structuralist Genette, the psychoanalytic Lacan, the structuralist to post-structuralist Barthes, the deconstructionist Derrida, and, of course, in Foucault, who makes "discourse" and its supposedly repressive modalities the major force of historical causation. There is an intrinsic connection between this denial of the authority or authenticity of literary realism and the turn from criticism to theory, as one plainly sees in *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981), Jonathan Culler's way-station to doctrinaire deconstruction, which categorically renounces interpretation as a legitimate activity of literary studies. Why, indeed, undertake a "reading" of *Anna Karenina* when your intellectual responsibility is to unmask its pretense to represent reality, to show how its notions of causality and personality and psychology merely replicate the arbitrary and coercive values that govern society as a whole?

I would seriously question this direct isomorphic correspondence between the literary use of language and the domination of ideology that is assumed by so many of the French theorists and their Anglo-American followers. Indeed, the correspondence theory about literary language and political ideology may in its seemingly sophisticated way be more naive than the old reflectionist theory of literary mimesis. To think about this issue in more concrete literary-historical terms, if one scrutinizes the masterworks of the realist tradition—which includes, after all, writers like Cervantes, Fielding, Sterne, Diderot, Stendhal, Thackeray, Melville, and Joyce—one may have doubts about the source of this model of realism as a use of "signs which pass themselves off as natural, which offer themselves as the only conceivable way of viewing the world." The French are in the habit of talking categorically about "the classic narrative," by which they generally mean everything before Proust, but the more one looks at premodern fiction—and the argument could be taken all the way back to the *Odyssey*—the more this notion of the "authoritarian" realistic narrative as a reflection and instrument of oppression seems like the fabrication of an adversary ideology. Even central 19th-century realists like Balzac and Dickens in certain ways delight in the arbitrariness of their own inventions, sometimes pretending the signs they use are natural but also flaunting their unnaturalness; and realism as a general mode has richly and variously anticipated contemporary theory in embodying a self-critical awareness of the ambiguity of mimesis in the fullness of the mimetic act. What I am suggesting is that the "authority" of traditional realistic texts is rather a more complicated affair than some theories in vogue would lead us to imagine, and that before we leap too quickly to generalizations about the politics of classic narrative, there is much still to be explored and better understood in that body of narrative itself.

IF REALISM is suspect for many of the new theorists, there is a still more fundamental suspicion about the general category, literature. Terry Eagleton is himself an eager participant in this process of unfrocking literature, and in this crucial respect the relation of his book to contemporary theory becomes symptomatic rather than analytic. He begins in an introductory chapter by asking what literature is, and concludes, with a certain plausibility, that it is not a stable entity because value judgments will lead to different decisions at different times and places about what is to be thought of as literature. In his survey of theories, he shows how every attempt to define "literariness," beginning with the Russian formalists in the 1920's, involves some inherent contradiction. True, we have firmly viewed Shakespeare as

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literature for three-and-a-half centuries, but, it is argued, one can imagine a future transformation of society in which people would get nothing out of Shakespeare, where "Shakespeare would be no more valuable than much present-day graffiti." Ergo, we cannot think of literature as one, definite, reasonably stable entity.

The transparent silliness of this *reductio ad absurdum* surely says something about the writer's determination to deny the intrinsic category literature at all costs. Anyone is of course free to entertain the most fantastic science-fiction hypotheses he wants to about the future, imagining societies where the Manhattan telephone directory will be read as an epic and Spinoza's *Ethics* as random doodlings. This hardly means, however, that within the empirical scope of our actual historical experience it is not perfectly legitimate to distinguish quite sharply between philosophy and less reasoned and rigorous forms of expression, or to find it useful to consider the *Iliad* literature, as has been done these past 2,700 years, in strong contradistinction to other lengthy assemblages of names or words.

John Searle, in a recent polemic against Derrida (*New York Review of Books*, October 27, 1983), has made the interesting suggestion that Derrida's way of thinking appeals to literary people because they seem to prefer neat, mutually exclusive categories, and if they cannot have them that way, they are happy to be persuaded that all category distinctions are ultimately reversible and hence meaningless. But, as Searle argues, many of our most useful categories in fact have fuzzy boundaries. This makes them tricky to work with in borderline cases, but by no means implies that they do not designate coherent phenomena. I would say this is true both of literature as an entity and of many of the key concepts current in literary analysis. As values shift, one might debate whether Augustine's *Confessions*, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, or Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* should be thought of as literature, but that does not compromise the soundness of identifying Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Spenser, Goethe as literature. In the same way, generic concepts like the novel, modal concepts like realism, even structural concepts like plot, have their notorious ambiguities and fuzzy boundaries, but we would be tongue-tied if we threw them out, and for all their problems, they repeatedly help us to make valuable distinctions and to grasp individual cases better.

EAGLETON, however, is so persuaded that the existence of literature has been disproved that in his concluding chapter he can announce, "This book is less an introduction than an obituary," and then proceed to propose that departments of literature be abolished, to be replaced by something that might be designated departments of discourse studies. If one accepts the supposed demonstration that Shakespeare and graffiti are in principle interchangeable under the aspect of eternity, then one should no longer teach Shakespeare as part of literature, which has no real existence, but together with graffiti, prison journals, television commercials, and business memoranda, as one kind of "discourse."

Lest readers suspect me of satiric exaggeration, let me quote Eagleton's own words in his proposal "to develop a form of study which would look at all the various sign-systems and signifying practices in our society, all the way from *Moby-Dick* to the Muppet Show, from Dryden and Jean-Luc Godard to the portrayal of women in advertisements and the rhetorical techniques of government reports." The death of literature, like that of God, would appear to make everything permissible. The ideological goal Eagleton has in mind is transparent, and the departments he is proposing might as well be called discourse-insurgency centers. The imperial impulse of this call to action is breathtaking. The literary critic-theorist, having lost faith in the object of his own inquiry—indeed, having announced its demise—aspires to plant his flag wherever language and images are used, to set up as a universal expert on all forms of human communication, and by stages to change the world through his universal wisdom, at last offering solutions that will not be part of the problem.

As a teacher and critic, I must confess that I have singularly little interest in what any of my literary colleagues might have to say about images of women in advertising, though I might learn a good deal from some of them about *Paradise Lost* or the novels of Flaubert. As a matter of currently observable fact, quite a few literary scholars, in the wake of deconstruction, Lacan, and related phenomena, have begun producing elaborate interpretations of Freud and Nietzsche as they might of Rilke and Joyce, without the benefit of a professional grasp of either psychoanalysis or philosophy, and the results have not been encouraging.

What I would argue is that literature does have its own distinctive language, however much the borders may shift or blur into other languages, and that someone who has devoted nearly a decade to the formal study of literature in the course of professional training may have a certain special competence to be usefully exercised on literary texts, and that is not especially relevant to other kinds of texts. To be sure, no specialized language develops in isolation from other languages in currency within a culture, and I don't mean to propose a hermetic isolation of the object of literary inquiry from other modes of expression or from society at large. One will no doubt find overlaps between the Muppet Show and *The Tempest*, but the "discourse" of the latter is not only immeasurably more complex, it is also simply different, and the analyst with the skills and knowledge to illuminate *The Tempest* may not be able to tell us much about

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the Muppet Show—and vice versa with a vengeance.

LET me conclude by offering one brief example of this distinctive language of literature, which may indicate why obituaries for literature are premature, and why it may still be possible to speak of a discipline of literary studies that appropriately takes as its object something different in kind from the objects of linguistics, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and media studies.

Here is a quatrain by W.B. Yeats entitled "The Nineteenth Century and After," which appears in his 1933 collection, *The Winding Stair*:

> Though the great song return no more
> There's keen delight in what we have:
> The rattle of pebbles on the shore
> Under the receding wave.

These lines can obviously be defined formally as a poem since they exhibit both meter (iambic tetrameter) and rhyme (abab). But are they poetry, which is to say, a subcategory of a distinctive kind of discourse called literature? One can cite uses of language that share formal features with our text but are not literature: advertising jingles, for example, possess both rhyme and meter (in some instances, this very rhyme-scheme and meter), and yet are not poetry, as I think this text clearly is. The differences are multifarious, having to do with audience, intention, subject, frames of reference and allusion, and the complexity with which the properly literary text marshals the resources of language for multiple purposes. A line like "O, Wheaties make you feel so good" is nearly identical rhythmically with "There's keen delight in what we have," but most people would deny it is literature because they recognize that, after all, it serves no purpose but to sell Wheaties. Literature obviously sometimes has a manipulative aspect as well but is never reducible solely to manipulation. The mechanical iambic tetrameter of the Wheaties line is a means for soothing or lulling consciousness while imprinting a seller's message on memory; the same metrical pattern in Yeats's line, as we shall see in a moment, serves much more complicated ends.

What might the student of literature do to account for the fullness of meaning of this poem that he could not do with a text of the Muppet Show, and that someone without specialized literary knowledge would not be equipped to do? He could begin with the title, which points to a large, traditionally literary subject (the passing of an era) and to a characteristically literary way of imagining the experience of the moment through long, recapitulative historical perspectives. The title also provides one initial clue to a famous 19th-century poem about an irrevocable historical transition, Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach." The speaker of that poem stands at the shore listening to "the grating roar / Of pebbles which the waves draw back," thinking of the Aegean of Sophocles and of how classical greatness has devolved into modern confusion.

It is by no means pedantic to introduce "Dover Beach" into our consideration of Yeats because literature as a language is intrinsically and densely allusive, Yeats in this case defining his meanings by citing the Arnold poem and marking a certain distance from it, making a kind of affirmation instead of Arnold's plangent complaint and eschewing the declamatory aspects of Arnold's rhetoric for a haiku-like compactness and concreteness he sometimes favored, along with Pound and other modernists. In any case, the larger meanings and cultural memories hinted in the sea imagery are activated by the recollection of Arnold's poem. But the quatrain involves a generic as well as a textual allusion, being a 20th-century version of a poetic genre called *recusatio* that goes back to the late Roman republic and is the poetic validation of a particular kind of style by an illustrative renunciation of a preceding, antithetical, and "grander" style (here, the "great song," perhaps ultimately alluding to the Homeric epics, that will return no more).

In keeping with its function as an instrument of *recusatio*, the diction of "The Nineteenth Century and After" is plain, unpretentious, with monosyllabics predominating, and only a few bisyllabics, the sole trisyllabic being the participle "receding" in the last line. At the same time, the subjunctive mood of the verb that controls the first line is the signal of a more formal diction, and the poem is characteristic of the mature Yeats in combining colloquial vigor and directness with a certain traditional stylistic decorum. The interplay between traditional form and modernist freedom also strongly marks the use of meter and rhyme. The only regular line of iambic tetrameter is the second, though it is the metrical ground against which the whole poem works. The first two metrical feet of the poem are a trochee and a spondee which have the effect of isolating and heavily emphasizing "great song" and making us experience the emergence of the iambic pattern in "return no more" and in the next line's assertion of keen delight as a kind of springing loose from the pressure of constraining forces. The concrete focus on the shingle in the last two lines brilliantly mimics the sound of pebbles shifting under the rhythmic movement of waves, and to that end, not only are stress patterns freely rearranged but the third line is allowed nine syllables instead of eight and the last line given only seven syllables and three stresses.

The very prosody, then, enacts the transformation of the great song into a less harmoniously symmetrical music. It is beautifully apt for the poem's statement about a diminished modernity that the

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concluding image should be of a receding wave, and the off-rhyme of "have" and "wave" closes the poem on a slightly dissonant note that is the perfect phonetic equivalent of what is being asserted: no grand resonances now, no oceanic harmonies, but the muted, scraping music of humble things within hand's reach.

I DON'T pretend that I have said everything worth saying about these four lines, or that all the interpretive inferences I have drawn from formal features of the poem are inevitable ones. What I do hope to have shown is that the quatrain uses a language which can properly be called a distinctive language of poetry, and that in order to see fully what is going on, we have to know something about how this distinctive language is conjugated and declined, which involves not only sound, syntax, and grammar but also prosody and literary history. We make sense of the poem by recognizing on various levels the ramified ways in which it belongs to literature, though of course there are other recognitions to be made as well.

It is true that literature has come to seem more problematic in regard to its nature and boundaries than it did even a generation ago, and that is probably to the good. But reports of the death of literature seem greatly exaggerated. If literature exists as a coherent entity, criticism is the informed art—never quite a science—of explicating and evaluating literature, and theory might better serve as guide and counsel to criticism instead of seeking to usurp its place, or to push it into the labyrinth of all possible forms of discourse.

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Memories of the Moscow Trials

Sidney Hook

More than any other series of events abroad, the Moscow Trials of 1936-37 were a turning point in the history of American liberalism. They were a turning point in my own political and intellectual development as well. Although I had been critical of the political program of the Soviet Union under Stalin, I never suspected that the Soviet regime was prepared to violate every fundamental norm of decency that had been woven into the texture of civilized life. The Moscow Trials taught me that any conception of socialism that rejected the centrality of moral values was only an ideological disguise for totalitarianism.

The upshot of the trials affected my philosophical theories too. I had been prepared to recognize that understanding the past was in part a function of our need to cope with the present and future, that rewriting history was in a sense a method of making it. But now I realized that such a view easily led to the denial of objective historical truth, to the cynical notion not only that history is written by the survivors but that historical truth is created by the survivors. This in turn led me to rethink some aspects of my objective relativism. Because nothing was absolutely true and no one could know the whole truth about anything, it did not follow that it was impossible to establish any historical truth beyond a reasonable doubt.

But to me perhaps the greatest shock connected with the trials was the discovery that hundreds of people proud of the liberal American heritage, which they had invoked in criticizing injustices in the United States, Italy, Germany, and Spain, abandoned that heritage when questions were raised about justice in the Soviet Union.

To understand something of the climate of opinion that led important segments of the American liberal community to betray their own principles, we must note the important change that occurred in the attitude of the official Communist movement in 1935, after the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). From a harebrained revolutionary extremism in which even left-wing Social Democrats—let alone liberals—had been denounced as allies of fascism, the Comintern now shifted to a policy of alliance with any group willing to enter a Popular Front whose fundamental principle was the defense of the Soviet Union. This shift was welcomed by almost all liberal groups at the time, mainly because it meant a surcease from the previous steady drumfire of denunciation against reformers by the multiple organs of Communist propaganda. No longer were reformers referred to as "rotten liberals"; they were now "honest liberals" with whom the Communists and their sympathizers were willing to work hand in hand against the universally detested menace of fascism. And even fascists were not beyond the pale if they were prepared to drop their hostility to the Soviet Union.

Psychologically this abrupt transition from what was technically called "Third Period Extremism" to Popular Frontism encouraged the open adherence of a considerable number of intellectuals, academics, and professionals to causes organized or dominated by Communists. In the past such public adherence had entailed some risk since it involved collaboration with a party openly urging the seizure of power by force and violence. Now there was absolutely no risk. For in a belated effort to establish their legitimacy as an indigenous American political party, the Communists were now quoting from Jefferson and Lincoln rather than Marx and Lenin. As Earl Browder put it in *What Is Communism?*: "We are the Americans and Communism is the Americanism of the 20th century."

On the international scene the change was even more dramatic. Even after Hitler had come to power, the Kremlin was still justifying the policy that had brought him there. On May 1, 1933, the Comintern declared in its official organ: "The establishment of an open fascist dictatorship, by destroying all the democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from the influence of social democracy, accelerates the rate of Germany's development toward proletarian revolution." By

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1935, realizing that the fascist dictatorship, far from accelerating the development toward social revolution, was girding itself for war against the Soviet Union, the Kremlin reversed course and ordered its national sections to cooperate with all elements in the population not hostile to the USSR.

In the new political atmosphere of the Popular Front, the news of the Moscow Trials burst like a bombshell. The principal defendants were all old Bolsheviks, Lenin's comrades-in-arms who had previously been glorified as the heroes of the October Revolution. Chief among the defendants was Leon Trotsky, then in forced exile, who at one time had been acknowledged by Stalin himself as the architect of the Petrograd insurrection that brought the Bolsheviks to power.

The charges were mind-boggling. Under the direct instructions of Trotsky, and despite their well-known Marxist convictions concerning the untenability of terrorism as an agency of social change, these old Bolsheviks were accused of having plotted and carried out the assassination of one of Stalin's leading associates (Kirov) in December 1934, and of having planned the assassination of Stalin himself and his other leading associates. Further, they had allegedly conspired with the fascist powers, notably Hitler's Germany and Imperial Japan, to dismember the Soviet Union. Presumably in order to allay the suspicion flowing from the Roman insight that no man suddenly becomes base, the defendants were even charged with having been agents of the British military intelligence at the very time they were storming the bastions of the Winter Palace. In addition, although the indictment seemed almost anticlimactic to the foregoing, they were accused of sabotaging the five-year plans in agriculture and industry by putting nails and glass in butter, inducing erysipelas in pigs, wrecking trains, etc.

As startling as the enormity of these offenses was the behavior of the defendants in the dock. They all confessed to everything with eagerness and at times went beyond the excoriations of the prosecutor in defaming themselves. Equally mystifying was the absence of any significant material evidence. Although there were references to several letters of Trotsky allegedly giving specific instructions to the defendants to carry out their nefarious deeds, none was introduced into evidence.

The first news of the trials promptly elicited from Trotsky a ringing denial of any guilt, together with a counteraccusation that the trials were an elaborate frame-up and that the defendants had been tortured into playing self-incriminating roles. Trotsky expressed a willingness to lay his case before an impartial international tribunal. Meanwhile, through the press, he was able to shoot embarrassing holes in the court testimonies of the defendants and the claims of the prosecutor, Andrei Vyshinsky.

In the United States, everyone at all interested in political affairs was agog over the Moscow Trials. At first the liberal community was stunned, and then a small section of it came to life with the organization of a committee that was innocently but unfortunately named the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. Naturally Trotsky's partisans were very active in this committee's work. But it came into existence through the call of five persons—three of whom I myself had induced to take up the cause, even though none of us was sympathetic to the Trotskyists. Indeed, my initial feelings, if anything, were strongly hostile to the Trotskyist group. From certain experiences I had had with them, I was already then more than half convinced that the Trotskyists were capable of doing, if not on the same scale, at least in the same spirit, precisely what I suspected the Stalinists of doing. It was indeed ironical to find the Trotskyists, victims of the philosophy of dictatorship they had preached for years, blossoming out as partisans of democracy and tolerance (and in later years attracting to their ranks young revolutionary neophytes unable to see through the calculated ambiguity of their rhetoric).

Why, then, did I wholeheartedly throw myself into the struggle to help organize a commission before which Trotsky could present his case? Because the issues transcended Trotsky and his followers, reaching to the question of the Russian Revolution itself. There was something inherently incredible in the notion that most of the architects of "the great experiment"—which still enjoyed high prestige in the West, partly because of ignorance of the terrible events of the famine years, but mainly because of the domestic effects of the Depression—were agents of the Western secret police. And if the bizarre court proceedings were a rigamarole played out for some dark punitive purpose of Stalin and his regime, the promise of socialism was revealed as a ghastly mockery of its great humanist ideals. It seemed to me that I would not be able to rest or devote myself with a full mind to anything else until the truth about the Moscow Trials was known. And I was still naive enough to believe that all except the *apparatchiks* of the Communist party would support an effort to make the truth known.

Hence, urged on by two leading American Trotskyists, Felix Morrow and Herbert Solow, I managed to procure the signatures of the philosophers John Dewey and Horace M. Kallen and of the Socialist leader Norman Thomas on the call for the formation of the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. (The other two signatories were the religious socialist Devere Allen and Freda Kirchwey of the *Nation*.) I had no difficulty with Kallen, but to my surprise, I had some trouble

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with Norman Thomas who was still smarting from the deceptive factional practices of the Trotskyists, and who saw little difference in the programmatic commitments of Stalin and Trotsky. Still, he finally came to see the importance of establishing the truth about the trials at a time when the Communists were appealing to the constituency of the Socialist party with demagogic calls for a Popular Front.

As for John Dewey, I very nearly did not get his signature despite, or rather because of, the fact that I had almost as a matter of course gotten him to sign scores of petitions for a variety of political causes in the past. When I wrote him (I forget now why it was that I didn't go to see him), he replied that he was tired and wanted to be left alone. Since he had no feeling one way or another about Trotsky and the Moscow Trials, since he was already seventy-eight years old, and since he was the target of every group soliciting political support, his weariness was understandable. Had anyone else requested him to sign the originating appeal, I suspect he would have declined.

No sooner was the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky organized than it turned out that the name automatically selected for it was a mistake. Among the first rationalizations offered by individuals who refused to lend their support was that the committee's very name showed that it was biased in Trotsky's favor. Yet while the unpaid office staff of the committee was made up of volunteers who were either partisans or sympathizers of the Trotskyist movement, I can attest that on the executive committee, of which I was one of the leading members, they played a subordinate role.

The committee's main activity was the organization of the Commission of Inquiry Into the Truth of the Moscow Trials, and the quest for commissioners proved to be very formidable. The counterattack against the whole idea of an investigation had already begun, and there were very few American liberals who were willing even to consider the prospect of serving—certainly not Arthur Garfield Hays and Roger Baldwin. Albert Einstein also declined.* From England Bertrand Russell was willing to lend his name to the appeal for a hearing but could not serve on the commission. On the strength of his and Dewey's moral support for the project, I wrote to George Santayana. He answered with a rather indignant letter of refusal expressing astonishment that of all persons I, who claimed to understand his philosophy, should have sought to embroil him in such an affair. It brought an end to our correspondence.

Ultimately, however, we were able to put together a group of persons well enough known in the liberal community to command respect. (In addition to Dewey himself, the commission included, among others, John Chamberlain, Carlo Tresca, Suzanne La Follette, and Benjamin Stolberg.)

THE first and most important step of the commission was to appoint a subcommission to travel to Mexico City, where Trotsky had finally found asylum, to take his testimony. It was crucial for the success of the commission that John Dewey consent to go because without him the press and public would have ignored the sessions. But would Dewey go? And since he was now crowding seventy-nine, should he go?

Once more I had visits from Morrow and Solow. Dewey must go and I must see to it. But the difficulty was that I had been urging Dewey to abandon all his other interests and concentrate on completing *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, a book he had been working on for years. To add to my discomfiture, Dewey asked me outright what he should do. I refused to advise him—partly because I felt it would be hypocritical for me to encourage him to go to Mexico City in view of my constant admonitions about his neglecting the *Logic*; partly because I feared being held responsible, especially by his family, if anything untoward were to happen to him in Mexico; and partly because I wanted to spare him the torrents of denunciation that would be his if he accepted.

When I communicated my doubts to Morrow and Solow, they were terribly upset. They asked me to arrange for the leader of the American Trotskyists, James Cannon, to see Dewey. I did, and Cannon subsequently was convinced that it was he who persuaded Dewey to go to Mexico. The truth of the matter is that Dewey, although polite to Cannon, was repelled by his outrageous flattery and his ward-healer's charm. What actually did the trick was Dewey's discovery that the Kremlin had organized a campaign among some of his old friends, especially from the social-work fraternity, to dissuade him from going to Mexico. Nevertheless, his son Fred held me responsible. "You son-of-a-bitch, it's all your fault," he railed at me outside his father's hearing at a family party before Dewey's departure, "if you hadn't got him to sign the original call of the American Committee for the Defense of Trotsky, Dad would be all out of this." Fred didn't know much about his father or his father's ideas.

The commission was fortunate in procuring as its counsel John T. Finerty, who had been active in a legal capacity in the Sacco-Vanzetti case and other liberal causes. By the time the subcommission, headed by Dewey, left for Mexico City, the project was a *cause célèbre*. It had been made so by Leon Trotsky's remarkable broadsides delivered in response to the communiqués and press releases emanating from Moscow.

Perhaps the most eloquent and effective of these broadsides was the address by Trotsky via radio

* See "My Running Debate with Einstein" in COMMENTARY, July 1982, for a full account of my negotiations with him over this matter.

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telephone to a mass meeting the defense committee had organized in New York's Hippodrome on February 9, 1937. The technical facilities were apparently sabotaged so that Trotsky's voice did not get through but, anticipating difficulties, he had forwarded his text, which was read to an audience of approximately 6,000. In the short space of an hour, he slashed at the main points of testimony bearing on his alleged meetings with the Moscow defendants, explained the mechanisms of terror that evoked the self-besmirching confessions, riddled the rationalizations of the Kremlin apologists, gave a thumbnail sketch of the causes of "the revolution betrayed," and most significant of all, offered to appear before a public and impartial commission of inquiry to confront the charges made against him. *"I declare: if this commission decides that I am guilty in the slightest degree of the crimes which Stalin imputes to me, I pledge in advance to place myself voluntarily in the hands of the executioners of the GPU."*

According to Vyshinsky, the prosecutor, there were volumes of damning material evidence confirming every last detail of the confessions of the defendants. Here, then, was a golden opportunity for the Kremlin to clinch its case before the court of public opinion and to allay the suspicion and skepticism of its critics. But it ignored an official invitation to lay its evidence before the commission or to send official Soviet representatives to question and cross-examine Trotsky as he presented his case.

More startling even than the behavior of the Soviet regime in replying to the invitation of the commission was the response of the predominant sections of American liberal opinion. This was exemplified above all in the position taken by the *New Republic*, of which Dewey was a contributing editor and with which his name had been associated from the day of its founding. One would have thought that in keeping with its traditions, the *New Republic* would have welcomed an attempt to get at the truth concerning the trials. Instead it systematically called into question the good faith as well as the usefulness of the Commission of Inquiry. Thus, on April 14, 1937, it reported that "a commission consisting of prominent liberals and Trotskyists went to Mexico to hear Trotsky's testimony on the charge of conspiring against the Soviet government." But there was not a single Trotskyist on the subcommission traveling to Mexico or indeed on the larger commission itself. To make this allegation was to cast advance doubt on its findings.

Further, on several occasions the *New Republic* indicated that it endorsed the verdict of the trials: "Mr. Walter Duranty of the New York *Times* knows as much about Russia as any foreigner. He . . . has apparently been forced to the conviction that the confessions are true . . . and it seems to us that the weight of the evidence supports Mr. Duranty's views" (February 3, 1937).

In any case, according to the *New Republic*, it was a profound mistake for liberals to become involved in a dispute over the Moscow Trials when their main business was the condition of liberty and justice in the United States. To be sure, "justice does not know national boundaries," but the editors could "see no evidence that civil liberties were so certainly violated in this case as to make a protest on this ground necessary." This, despite the fact that Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedoff were being convicted for a capital offense without a hearing which the Soviet Union could easily have initiated by extradition proceedings. The editors admitted that it was "the responsibility of believers in civil liberty to hold their minds open for any further evidence"; but if so one would imagine that they would have welcomed the commission's efforts. Instead, they argued, "It remains for us, who have a larger degree of political freedom, to defend it by fighting for it at home" (February 17, 1937).

This was very curious advice. When Hitler began his persecution of the Communists immediately after coming to power in Germany, the *New Republic* did not urge liberals to avoid involvement in controversies over German policy and concentrate on defending liberty at home. Actually, at the very time that they were giving this advice to American liberals, they were urging these liberals to become involved in the struggle against fascism in Spain. Yet it was already clear that even the defense of Spanish democracy against Franco was being affected by the Moscow Trials, since the Communist forces in Spain, at the behest of the Kremlin, were purging those who expressed any doubt about the authenticity of the trials. It was indeed odd that a periodical which had once proclaimed that the struggle for truth, freedom, and justice was indivisible should suddenly urge that liberals turn their attention to matters at home.*

The *New Republic*'s editorial retreat to the position "let us attend to our own knitting" and leave off discussing the Moscow Trials was somewhat disingenuous because its literary editor, Malcolm Cowley, kept on writing impassioned defenses of the justice of the trials and signing denunciations of the Commission of Inquiry. In his review of the official proceedings of the trials, for example, not only did he swallow whole Stalin's charge

* Sickened by the *New Republic*'s betrayal of long cherished liberal principles and associations, John Dewey wrote to its executive editor, Bruce Bliven, resigning as contributing editor, in which capacity he had served since 1914. Bliven responded with a copy of an editorial reply of an extremely personal nature he proposed to publish with Dewey's letter. In order not to prejudice the public reception of the commission's findings, Dewey decided to resign quietly—a decision he later told me he intensely regretted—and his name was dropped from the roster of contributing editors without any explanation.

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that Trotsky, Bukharin, and most of Lenin's other lieutenants were guilty of treasonable dealings with Germany, Poland, Japan, and the British intelligence service; he also held them responsible for such "mean and repulsive" crimes as "pouring nails and broken glass into eighty carloads of butter, spreading corn beetles in the granaries, infecting horses with anthrax or cholera, and hogs with erysipelas. . . ."

The reaction of Malcolm Cowley to the Moscow Trials was close to the blind fury of the official standard bearers of the Communist-party line among intellectuals—writers like Michael Gold, Nelson Algren, and the other worthies who clustered around the party magazine, the *New Masses*. But Cowley was more effective and influential than those of his comrades-in-arms who were under party discipline because he and they could honestly say that he was not a party member, and was therefore presumably more detached about the issues. On occasion he even entered a reservation or two about the claims made by the Kremlin and its partisans. Nonetheless, by the end of the 30's his friend and patron Edmund Wilson (who, even according to Cowley himself, was above the battle of factions) felt compelled to write him in protest against the way he was exercising his duties as literary editor of the *New Republic*: "You have been carrying on in a way that matches the *New Masses* at its worst. . . . You write better than the people on the regular Stalinist press but what you are writing is simply Stalinist character assassination of the most reckless and libelous sort."

As Wilson's reference to the *New Masses* makes clear, that magazine specialized in attacking anyone who was raising doubts about the Moscow Trials. One tack was to present the critics as vain, superficial creatures, "migrating intellectuals" in Michael Gold's phrase, flitting from one political view to another. Thus, not long after the organization of the Trotsky Defense Committee was announced, Gold wrote: "It is easy to criticize the Soviet Union in a steam-heated New York restaurant, before a group of book reviewers and college instructors who have never shot a White Guard saboteur in their lives. . . ." The fact, of course, was that more book reviewers and college instructors endorsed the Moscow Trials than denounced them, and without earning any accolades for exterminating White Guards. "Why should I make Sidney Hook my political guide rather than Earl Browder or Stalin?," Gold went on to ask. But I was not offering myself as a political guide; I was calling for an inquiry into the truth of the Moscow Trials.

Nevertheless, for another contributor to the *New Masses*, Henry Roth, the author of *Call It Sleep*, the "only way of accomplishing . . . the united front against fascism" was to support the verdict of the Moscow Trials. In this Roth was typical of the politically unsophisticated literary people who felt they were discharging their responsibilities to "the growth of enlightenment and freedom" not only by accepting the trial verdicts but by attacking the integrity and credibility of those who sought to open an inquiry into the trials.

Lack of political sophistication cannot, however, be cited in extenuation of the faction known as the Communist Opposition for endorsing the first Moscow Trials. An editorial in its official organ, *Worker's Age*, declared:

> . . . We are convinced that there is no adequate reason to doubt the confessions made by the accused. We can see how there can be discussion as to the manner of the confessions, their groveling character, but we do not see any reason to doubt the genuineness of the confessions. . . . In addition, it must be remembered that for two years now the Trotskyists and other elements have been openly advocating the perspective of the violent overthrow of the Stalin regime in Russia, that is, of civil war. Between advocating an armed overturn and carrying out terroristic acts there is no difference in principle. The difference is only a technical one. . . .

It was only when Bukharin's name was mentioned during the course of a later trial that the Communist Opposition—which was associated in the public eye with Bukharin's ideological tendency—saw the handwriting on the wall.*

Nor could lack of sophistication be imputed to Walter Duranty, the New York *Times* correspondent in Moscow—the same Duranty who at the height of the famine brought on by the forced collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union, denied that it was taking place.† In an article on "The Riddle of Russia: What Lies Behind Recent Events in the USSR" (*New Republic*, July 14, 1937), Duranty, who attended the trials, did not discuss the evidence but deduced Trotsky's guilt from the simple fact of his political opposition to Stalin. As he put it:

> a. Trotsky was fanatically determined to overthrow the Stalin regime.
>
> b. Hitler was fanatically determined to "expand eastwards" at the expense of the USSR.
>
> c. Both Hitler and Trotsky had at their disposal efficient organizations to develop conspirative action, sabotage, and espionage within the USSR, and to conduct propaganda abroad.

* The leaders of the Communist Opposition later developed into knowledgeable and effective anti-Communists and made invaluable contributions to the organized American labor movement, which has remained a bastion of political freedom, independent trade-unionism, and democratic social reform.

† See "The Famine the *Times* Couldn't Find," by Marco Carynnyk, COMMENTARY, November 1983—ED.

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d. Opportunities for contact between Germany (and Japan) and the anti-Stalin conspirators both inside and outside the USSR were not lacking.

The conclusion [of Trotsky's guilt] is inevitable.

Even if one granted every one of the four premises—and each had multiple meanings requiring amplification and qualification—the conclusion was a blatant non sequitur. The same type of thinking would lead to the conclusion that Lenin was in the pay of the German Imperial Army to overthrow the regime of Kerensky. Duranty also suppressed the fact that the chief defendants were taxed with being spies for the British secret service at the outset of the revolution and long before Hitler appeared on the historical scene. Further, he denied that the morale of the Red Army had been affected by the liquidation of its generals, denied that there was any "mystery" about the trials or confessions, denied the existence of a widespread purge, denied that the USSR was "engulfed in a flood of hysterical witch-hunting." The Soviet Union's enemies, he said, had circulated these tales to weaken its prestige "but that does not alter the fact that their Trojan horse is broken and its occupants destroyed."

But the strongest opposition to the organization of the American Committee for the Defense of Trotsky, to the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry, and to the findings of the commission was led by Corliss Lamont, the son of Thomas Lamont, a partner of the famous banking and investment firm of Morgan & Co. Lamont was certainly an unlikely prospect for a role of this kind, but I fear that I was indirectly responsible for it.

Corliss Lamont had been a classmate of mine at Columbia and had taken courses in philosophy with Woodbridge and Dewey. When I met him he was headed for the ministry, but I converted him to atheism—to the despair of his mother—and then went on to convert him and his wife to socialism. He was about to join his wife in applying for membership in the Socialist party, but fearful that because of his background he would come in for a great deal of abuse and ribbing from other radical groups, especially the Communists, I suggested that he concern himself with matters farther from home like the Soviet Union.

Accepting this advice, he made several trips to the Soviet Union. Despite my own growing disillusion with the Soviet bureaucracy, its despotism and terror against dissenters, Lamont remained completely unmoved by doubts and criticisms. The Soviet Union became his fetish and he its professional apologist. Although he never joined the Communist party, he headed some of its most important front organizations like Friends of the Soviet Union, and became a leading member of a score of others, using his immense wealth over the years to rally support for the USSR. He devoted himself to defending the civil rights of American Communists, but when the followers of Leon Trotsky were indicted under the Smith Act in 1941, he refused to contribute to their defense. Naturally he was made much of by the Communist-party functionaries, flattered and applauded as an "honest liberal," and always trotted out on holiday occasions to sing the virtues of the Soviet Union under Stalin.

The first step against the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky was a broadside entitled "An Open Letter to American Liberals" composed by Lamont which was signed by eighty-eight individuals (including writers like Theodore Dreiser, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker, Nathanael West, Newton Arvin, Malcolm Cowley, and Granville Hicks). The letter attacked the committee on the ground that its "demand for an investigation of trials carried on under the legally constituted judicial system of the Soviet government can only be interpreted as political intervention in the affairs of the Soviet Union with hostile intent."

This was an extraordinary statement, even for people as ideologically besotted about the achievements of the Soviet Union as were Lamont and the signatories of his letter. After all, Captain Dreyfus had been convicted under the legally constituted judicial system of France. Moreover, when Communists were tried in China, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, indeed in any country except the Soviet Union, Lamont and his fellow signatories would usually preface appeals in their behalf with statements to the effect that justice has no geographical boundaries.

There was worse to come. *After* the Dewey commission report was made public, Lamont delivered a radio reply. In it he ignored the twenty-one separate counts on which, basing itself on new affidavits and new documentary evidence, the commission flatly contradicted the verdict of the Moscow court. Instead he offered a defense of the trials on the most astonishing ground that "The Soviet regime and its achievements are indivisible; and we cannot believe that its system of justice is completely out of step with its splendid accomplishments in practically all other fields." This went beyond anything the Kremlin itself ever claimed. Under American capitalism many wonderful things had also been achieved, but what rational person would foreclose inquiry into the justice of any case on the ground that "the regime and its achievements are indivisible"?

The Rykov-Bukharin trial, the third public trial, was held after the Dewey commission's inquiries into the first two were completed. Since the official charges against the new defendants rested on the two previous trials, and since the indicated outline of testimony to be introduced

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logically rested on assertions already proved to be false, and since, once again, Trotsky and Sedoff were named as the chief organizers of the plots, the commission issued a statement branding this trial as a continuation of the others. And in fact, as the specific allegations were made public in the Moscow courtroom, the commission provided Troyanovsky, the Soviet ambassador, with concrete evidence of the falsity of the charges made by the new "intermediaries" between Trotsky and the other defendants.

Lamont was beside himself over the actions of the commission. He sent a long telegram to Dewey which read in part:

SURPRISED TO SEE IN THE N.Y. TIMES OF MARCH 2 THAT COMMISSION HEADED BY YOU WITHOUT WAITING TO HEAR ONE WORD OF THE TESTIMONY IN THE PRESENT MOSCOW TREASON TRIALS DENOUNCED THESE TRIALS AS FRAME-UPS. THIS IS PRECISE OPPOSITE OF EXPERIMENTAL SCIENTIFIC METHODS ADVOCATED IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY . . . THIS LEADS ME TO ASK IF YOU SUPPORT STATEMENT OF DEWEY COMMISSION SINCE YOU MUST BEAR RESPONSIBILITY IN MIND OF PUBLIC. . . . WOULD APPRECIATE A WIRE COLLECT.

CORLISS LAMONT

To which Dewey replied:

EXPERIMENTAL METHOD DOES NOT PREVENT USE OF INTELLIGENCE AND AUTHENTIC KNOWLEDGE PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED. ON CONTRARY SCIENTIFIC METHOD DEMANDS APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE PREVIOUSLY HAD BY ITS USE TO JUDGING RELATED PRESENT AND FUTURE CONDITIONS. MATERIAL GIVEN OUT BY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY HAS HAD MY PRIOR AUTHORIZATION. I ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY. NO CAUSE FOR WORRY.

JOHN DEWEY*

AN IMPRESSION prevails in some quarters that in his famous denunciation of Stalin in 1956, Khrushchev discussed the Moscow Trials, whose justice he had originally hailed, and tore the mask of mystery from the bizarre proceedings. Khrushchev did no such thing. He never discussed the Moscow Trials or any of the persons involved. Nor have any of his successors. Some of the victims of the third trial have been rehabilitated—but not Bukharin. One should ask Malcolm Cowley, Corliss Lamont, and other defenders of the trials who have recently discovered that they were "mistakes" what evidence led them to reverse their judgment. They cannot point to any document or argument or piece of testimony that was not as available at the time of the trials or shortly thereafter as today. The simple truth is that among large if not dominant sectors of American liberal opinion, when it came to evaluating events in the Soviet Union, the will to believe—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say the will to illusion—prevailed over ascertainable fact and rational analysis. It was not until the Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939 that things began to change—and even then a surprisingly large number of "honest liberals" like Corliss Lamont refused to be budged from a faith that had successfully survived the Moscow Trials.

* For many interesting details of this and related incidents, see my "Corliss Lamont—Friend of the G.P.U.," *Modern Monthly*, March 1938.

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Cynthia Ozick, Jewish Writer

Joseph Epstein

On more than one occasion Edith Wharton was called "a Henry James in skirts," a remark that chagrined, irritated, and finally infuriated her. If only someone had said the same thing of Cynthia Ozick, the comparison would have made her day. As a young woman Miss Ozick had a real thing for Henry James. I use the vague, gossip-column word "thing," but Miss Ozick tells us that, at age twenty-two, nearsighted, departing from graduate school without a Ph.D., she actually "became" Henry James—and not the young, still hesitant Henry James, groping for the essentials of his art, but the elderly bald Henry James, the high priest of fiction, the figure whom Leon Edel refers to, appositely, as the Master.

What Cynthia Ozick is talking about here is a very virulent case of the Jamesian virus—another, earlier sufferer was Willa Cather—whose chief symptoms are an unrelenting dedication to the craft of fiction and the belief that nothing is so important as literature, life itself seeming but wan and shabby by comparison. This virus can hit anywhere; it first struck Miss Ozick when she was a seventeen-year-old bookworm reading between deliveries in her father's drugstore in the Bronx. At that time, in that place, she read James's story "The Beast in the Jungle" and decided, then and there, that "Here, here was my autobiography."

Miss Ozick recounts this Jamesian phase in her life in a brief essay entitled "The Lesson of the Master," in which she not only takes up her misbegotten infatuation with James as a priest of art but her sad misreading of James, whose true view, as she has come to see, is not that one must deny all for art but instead that one must live life to the fullest. "I mistook him," writes Miss Ozick, "I misheard him, I missed, absolutely and irrevocably, his essential note."

In another of her essays, Miss Ozick once again strikes the note of regret:

> In my twenties I lived the life of the elderly Henry James. In my thirties I worshiped E.M. Forster for the lure of his English paganism. Fifteen years went into a silent and shadowed apprenticeship of craft and vision. When at last I wrote a huge novel I meant it to be a Work of Art—but as the years ground through that labor, it turned, amazingly and horribly, into a curse. I discovered at the end that I had cursed the world I lived in, grain by grain. And I did not know why. Furthermore, that immense and silent and obscure labor had little response—my work did not speak to the Gentiles, for whom it had been begun, nor to the Jews, for whom it had been finished. And I did not know why. Though I had yearned to be famous in the religion of Art, to become so to speak a saint of Art, I remained obscure.

The "huge novel" referred to in this passage is her first, *Trust* (1966). She also refers to it, in an essay otherwise having to do with feminism ("Previsions of the Demise of the Dancing Dog"), as "an enormous novel, the writing of which had taken many more years than any novel ought to take." *Trust* must be reckoned Miss Ozick's pledgeship to the fraternity of literature, and it was not, as she avers, an easy one. It is an exhausting novel; it is also a badly misshapen and sadly misconceived one. It is a book filled with lengthy opaque paragraphs, heavy-handed symbolism, vast stretches of overwriting, flat jokes (most of them involving puns), and a general over-richness such as can cause one's mental teeth to ache.

In a reconsideration of Truman Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, Miss Ozick called the book "the novel of someone who wanted, with a fixed and single-minded and burning will, to write a novel." Her own *Trust* is just such a novel, by a writer who was herself stuffed with literature. One can read back into it—with its talk of the Holocaust, radical politics, the death of Europe, the social classes, muses, literary puzzles, the meaning of money—nearly every literary preoccupation of the years during which it was written. Yet it contains flashes of brilliance as well, such as this nice distinction between Materialists and Idealists:

> He's reading Materialism and Idealism. What it means, you see, is that there are two sorts of philosophers, Materialist and Idealist. One thinks the world is bad and really there, the others think the world is good and not really there. The Materialists—the ones who think the world exists but is bad—believe in God, but hate him for creating a bad world; and the Idealists—the other camp—are atheists who would love God if only they believed in Him.

"Two things are equally boring in art," the poet Howard Moss has written, "a lack of skill and too much of it," and in *Trust* Miss Ozick managed to demonstrate both simultaneously.

Cynthia Ozick's plight was not an uncommon one among young writers: a flaming desire to write combined with nothing much to say. By the time *Trust* was published, however, she was thirty-eight—not quite still young. Like many writers of her generation, she may well have been, if not over-educated, then over-impressed with the importance, not to say the sacredness, of literature. It is not easy to get

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much work done with such characters as Henry James, E.M. Forster, T.S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf hovering about one's head. The trick may reside in somehow at the same time incorporating and shaking off such influences. Complicated stuff. As Miss Ozick says at the end of her Henry James essay, "Influence is perdition."

AS LATE as 1970, in a paper delivered at a conference in Israel, Miss Ozick, almost by the way, could note: "I am a writer, slow and unprolific, largely unknown. . . ." But she would not be slow or unprolific or largely unknown for very much longer. Something happened to change all that. The dam burst: stories, a number of extraordinary essays, a novel all flowed forth. Suddenly, Cynthia Ozick's number came up: she won a Guggenheim Fellowship and something financially more rewarding called a Mildred and Harold Strauss Living Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. She was now the subject of profiles in such places as the New York *Times Magazine*. (Do you suppose they are called "profiles" because, after having submitted to one, it is difficult to look one's friends straight in the face?) What all high-school girls of my generation sedulously avoided, and what all writers quite as sedulously seek, Cynthia Ozick now had: a reputation.

Although Miss Ozick never tells us how exactly it came about, what happened to her as a writer is fairly clear from the evidence she supplies in her essays.* What happened is that she acquired a point of view. (Of a character in his novel *Guerrillas*, V.S. Naipaul remarks that she had a great many opinions but that these did not add up to a point of view.) Cynthia Ozick's point of view was Jewish. Not that she wasn't Jewish all along, but now she became a Jewish writer. Miss Ozick may be the only prominent writer in America who is prepared to let that adjective appear before that noun. "I am not a Jewish writer; I am a writer who is a Jew," Philip Roth has said. I believe that, on more than one occasion, Saul Bellow has said something similar. In declaring themselves thus, these writers by no means wish to hide or even play down their Jewishness; not a bit. What they are doing is trying to preserve their writing from the label (the accusation?) of parochialism. They are Jews, but their writing, they wish to affirm, is part of Western civilization. Cynthia Ozick apparently wishes no part of such distinctions. She considers herself, she wishes to be known as, she is, a Jewish writer.

WHAT does it mean to be a Jewish writer? Those Jews who like to claim as many vaguely distinguished figures as possible for the Jewish people—the cultural and intellectual equivalent of Jewish kids who can name eleven Jewish American League third-basemen—might wish to list, say, Woody Allen, Norman Mailer, and Susan Sontag as Jewish writers. One can easily imagine their arguments for doing so. Woody Allen's work demonstrates the rich complexity—self-reflexive yet casting a suspicious eye outward —that has long characterized Jewish humor. Mailer's restless questing for new styles, his ceaseless plumbing of the depths of alienation, offer a near-perfect parable of the modern Jew in the Diaspora. Susan Sontag's tireless energy for making distinctions, her ability to turn an argument first this way, then that, resemble no other activity so much as that of talmudic study. Such dumb stuff has constituted the substance of a great deal of talk about "Jewish writers."

Cynthia Ozick is different. She calls herself a Jewish writer because, first, she has given up "the religion of Art," and, second, takes seriously the Jewish covenant and its commandments. What is more, she believes that it is only through taking such a turn that writers who are Jews have—or, rather, that their work has—a chance to survive. Excluding only those two half-Jews, Montaigne and Proust, Miss Ozick maintains that "there are no major works of Jewish imaginative genius written in any Gentile language, sprung out of any Gentile culture." Especially do minor writers who are Jews, in her view, fall quickly into oblivion when they try in effect to pass in Gentile culture; here she cites the case of Isaac D'Israeli, now forgotten as a man of letters and remembered at best as the father of the first Prime Minister of England of Jewish ancestry. "The fact is," she says, "that nothing thought or written in Diaspora has ever been able to last unless it has been centrally Jewish."

But then how strictly Miss Ozick means us to take her notion of "the Jewish writer" becomes a bit unclear when she claims, in the same essay, that the 19th-century novel, at its pinnacle, was "a Judaized novel," adding: "George Eliot and Dickens and Tolstoy were all touched by the Jewish covenant; they wrote of conduct and of the consequences of conduct; they were concerned with a society of will and commandment." Miss Ozick is here defending the novel, and literature generally, against those who view it as having no ideational but only aesthetic interest. Still, in asserting the importance of the Jewish point of view and then citing George Eliot, Dickens, and Tolstoy as exemplars—isn't this rather like leavening your bread and calling it matzah, too?

Although not a systematic or analytical thinker, Cynthia Ozick can be a provocative, even a startling one. She is impressively unpredictable. Just when one thinks one has her locked into a fixed position, she springs free. For example, *Art & Ardor* contains three essays on feminism. Two of them—"The Hole/Birth Catalogue," which is an attack on the Freudian notion that anatomy is destiny, and "Previsions of the Demise of the Dancing Dog," which is an attack on the clichés about female literary sensibility—are fairly standard feminist fare. The third essay, "Literature and the Politics of Sex: A Dissent," however, must have given fits to the editors of *Ms.* magazine, where it originally appeared. In this essay Miss Ozick disavows the label "woman writer"—as, interestingly, she doesn't disavow that of "Jewish writer"—and sets out the claims, with admirable clarity and fine passion, of imagination over politics. "Politics," she declares, "begins with premises; imagination goes in search of them." She delivers a ter-

* *Art & Ardor*, Knopf, 305 pp., $16.95. A number of the essays in this collection originally appeared in COMMENTARY.

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rific chop to the ideological turn that feminism has taken, when she writes: "Now we are enduring a feminism so far advanced into 'new truths' that it has arrived at last at a set of notions indistinguishable from the most age-encrusted, unenlightened, and imprisoning anti-feminist views." And she closes by maintaining that women who write, like all writers, need not worry about fighting for freedom—in their imaginations they already have it.

CYNTHIA OZICK, then, is a Jewish writer who is also a woman; but, in addition, she is a writer of stories and novels who is also an essayist. Many a novelist has performed handsomely as an essayist; and at present among women in particular there are a number of writers—Mary McCarthy, Elizabeth Hardwick, Susan Sontag, Renata Adler, Joan Didion—who, so to speak, go both ways. The proper and highest and most academically kosher critical principles call for a critic to ignore a novelist's essays when confronting his fiction. Yet in Cynthia Ozick's case this becomes difficult to do, not only because she often remarks penetratingly upon fiction in her essays but because it may well be that she is a better essayist than novelist. (So, incidentally, are the five women mentioned between my dashes two sentences above, though none, I suspect, would be pleased to hear it.)

Brilliant, quirky, profound, outrageous—these are some of the adjectives I would haul into service to describe Cynthia Ozick's quality as an essayist. Her brilliance, when she is writing at the top of her bent, is very bright indeed, as in her portraits of Virginia Woolf and Edith Wharton. The Virginia Woolf essay is an instance of brilliance combining with quirkiness, for it turns out to be really quite as much an essay on Leonard Woolf as on Virginia, and it asks, among other rude but interesting questions, what was a nice Jewish boy like Leonard doing in a place like Bloomsbury? The flow of essayistic observation is constant and high: "Candor," she notes apropos of Leonard Woolf, "is often the mode of the obtuse person." Miss Ozick rates Virginia Woolf higher than I do, and she also rates John Updike higher than I do, but she is the sort of writer with whom you do not have to agree to find interesting. In writing about Updike's *Bech* books, for example, she notices that Bech, a Jewish character, is one of the few of Updike's characters who has no theological life; he is, as she wittily says, "a secular/neuter."

If Miss Ozick has flaws as an essayist, these include a tendency, given the wrong subject, to abstraction that almost instantly turns into intellectual Excedrin headaches 51 through 163, and another tendency to wing it on the spirit of imagination alone. For an example of Cynthia Ozick at her most impenetrable, one cannot do better (do worse?) than her essay "Literature as Idol: Harold Bloom," a title whose arrhythmic sound is matched by prose that must have something to do with the imitative fallacy, for in this essay Miss Ozick has taken an unreadable critic and written unreadably about him—a case, perhaps, of letting the punishment fit the crime. But why should I, an innocent reader, have to sit in a cell with such abstruse prose upon my lap?

Aldous Huxley once defined the art of Montaigne, the first great practitioner of the essay form, as "free association artistically controlled." Of her own essays, Miss Ozick writes: "The only nonfiction worth writing—at least for me—lacks the summarizing gift, is heir to nothing, and sets out with empty pockets from scratch." I think she is mistaken about her own gifts here. Two such essays in *Art & Ardor* in which she "sets out with empty pockets from scratch" are "The Riddle of the Ordinary" and "The Biological Premises of Our Sad Earth-Speck," and each quickly falls into deadly abstraction and what I think of as undocumented and hence unpersuasive grandiosity. In my view, Miss Ozick's best essays are those in which she writes about artists, for she has the soul of an artist herself, and entry to the souls of other artists is not barred to her.

CLEARLY Cynthia Ozick thinks of herself as an artist—a writer of stories and novels. She prefers fiction to essays for, among other reasons, the sense of adventure and risk that the former provides. "Fiction is all discovery," she has written, "discovery plotted—fallen into, rather—by character: first the writer's, and only then the characters'. Even failure is worthwhile—so much has been dared: scaling an edge to find out something 'new,' 'true'—inherent, immanent, encoded—that was unsuspected at the start, and by the end seems both ingenious and right." This is a bit more abstract than is necessary, but one knows what Miss Ozick means: in an essay one is aware of one's destination, in a story one is astonished at having arrived where one has. This sense of astonishment is often shared by Cynthia Ozick's readers, though here, it must be said, astonishment does not always imply satisfaction.

Cynthia Ozick is an original. There is no one now writing quite like her, nor is she quite like anyone else (pressed, I suppose one could tickle out traces of Bernard Malamud, I.B. Singer, and Saul Bellow). Unlike so many contemporary fiction writers, for the most part her creative sources do not seem patently autobiographical. She does not write in yesterday's bedclothes, which is to say that, although she can be a sexy writer—see, for two examples, her stories "The Pagan Rabbi" and "Puttermesser and Xanthippe"—sex is not at the center of her fiction. As she once said in a memorial essay about Maurice Samuel, "He revered language, but he loved idea more," so is she, passionate about language though she obviously is, even more passionate about ideas in fiction. "For me," wrote Vladimir Nabokov, "a work of fiction exists only insofar as it affords me what I shall bluntly call aesthetic bliss. . . ." Miss Ozick is far from inattentive to aesthetic bliss, but for her, as she puts it in the preface to *Bloodshed and Three Novellas* (1976), "a story must not merely *be*, but mean," and in the same preface she adds: ". . . I believe stories ought to judge and interpret the world."

I admire Cynthia Ozick's sense of artistic vocation, I admire her prose, I admire her views on the point and purposes of fiction—I admire almost everything about her, in fact, but her stories. I hope I am appreciative of all of them; I know I am impressed by many of

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them; and I confess to having been amazed by a few. But for all that I am appreciative, impressed, even amazed by Miss Ozick's fiction, in the end I am usually left unsatisfied by it. Why, I ask myself, why?

For a time I thought that the difficulty with Cynthia Ozick's fiction was that she simply didn't know how to end a story successfully. I thought of her art as comparable to that of a very considerable chess player of my imagining. This player is a man with astonishing openings, stunning defenses, a player who can make knights and bishops and even pawns do things one had scarcely realized they could do, a player with all the moves but one —namely, the ability to work his opponent into checkmate. The analogy is not quite neat, for Cynthia Ozick's stories do end, but their endings seem to fall far short of what has gone before. They seem to end ineptly. Or, to switch analogies from chess to bullfighting, many an Ozick story seems to me rather like a bullfight in which the matador works the bull with the greatest subtlety and elegance, and then, at the moment of climax, drops the bull with a grenade.

TAKE as an example the title story from the volume *Levitation, Five Fictions* (1982). It is about a husband and wife, both novelists, who give a party. The husband makes his living as an editor. "His manner was powerless," Miss Ozick writes, in one of her lovely touches, "he did not seem like an editor at all." He is a Jew; she, the daughter of a minister, is spiritually if not technically a convert to Judaism. As novelists, the one principle they agree on is never to write about writers. They agree on other things as well. Both husband and wife are absorbed by questions of social-literary power; both recognize their own powerlessness.

> About their own lives they had a joke: they were "secondary-level" people. Feingold had a secondary-level job with a secondary-level house. Lucy's own publisher was secondary-level; even the address was Second Avenue. The reviews of their books had been written by secondary-level reviewers. All their friends were secondary-level. . . .

Meanwhile, to their party they invite a number of "luminaries." Miss Ozick names names: Irving Howe, Susan Sontag, Alfred Kazin, Leslie Fiedler; Norman Podhoretz, Elizabeth Hardwick, Philip Roth, Joyce Carol Oates, Norman Mailer; William Styron, Donald Barthelme, Jerzy Kosinski, Truman Capote. None shows up. Instead the usual crowd does. People divide up to talk about different subjects: theater and film in the dining room; Jews, among them a refugee, are discussing Jews in the living room. The wife thinks how intense Jews can be. "They were intense all the time; she supposed the grocers among them were as intense as any novelist; was it because they had been Chosen, was it because they pitied themselves every breathing moment?"

Details in this story are concrete, anchored in the particular. We have those names of living writers. We have little bowls of potato chips, carrot and celery sticks; the husband eats the last olive. Everything in place, all set—all right, hang on. The living room begins to levitate. The talk by Jews about Jews is apparently causing this to happen. "The room was ascending. . . . It was getting free of her [the wife], into loftiness, lifting Jews." While this is happening the wife has an illumination about a scene in a city park, in which Sicilian dancers and an anthropologist from the Smithsonian figure prominently, but whose point is to remind her "how she has abandoned nature, how she has lost the true religion on account of the God of the Jews." Coming out of her illumination, the wife realizes that she is tired of hearing about the Holocaust. She "decides it is possible to become jaded by atrocity. She is bored by the shootings and the gas and the camps, she is not ashamed to admit this. They are as tiresome as prayer." She returns to the dining room, where the secondary-level people are talking about secondary-level things. At the story's close, the husband and the refugee are "riding the living room." The story's final two sentences are: "Their words are specks. All the Jews are in the air."

I may sound more like a landlord than a critic here, but I react to this story by asking, "Madam, what is that living room doing on the ceiling? Madam, I implore you, get those Jews down, please!" I recognize that Miss Ozick is reaching for something deep and special here. Can she be referring, metaphorically, to the inherent *luft*iness of Jews, to the spirituality that can set them apart, especially when they speak of themselves among themselves? No doubt she is, and she is no doubt referring to more as well. But the atmosphere up there, in that living room aloft, and in the story "Levitation," finally seems extremely thin. I prefer my Jews grounded. An artist, I realize, may do with her art what she likes. Yet a reader may say that it isn't enough.

But then I seem to like least those of Cynthia Ozick's stories that she herself likes best. The title story in *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* (1971) is about what its title advertises: a brilliant young rabbi who goes pagan, makes love to a dryad (" 'Scripture does not forbid sodomy with plants,' I exclaimed"), and eventually takes his own life. "The Pagan Rabbi" is a piece of dazzling writing; to render an account of lovemaking with a supra-human being believable, as Miss Ozick does here, is no small trick of craft. It is all almost too glittering, too astonishing. It is virtuosity unfettered. And yet it puts one in mind of nothing quite so much as a sentence from Miss Ozick's own criticism: "In literature it is perilous to be too original in one's premises—one ends not with a novel but with a fairy tale."

IN THE title story of *Bloodshed and Three Novellas*, Jules Bleilip, a lawyer who is currently working as a fund-raiser, goes off, out of curiosity, to visit a female cousin who has married into a hasidic community in a new-made town outside New York. Most of the members of the community are survivors of the death camps or children of survivors. A secularist himself, a man "whose vocabulary was habitually sociological," Bleilip is both repelled by these religious refugees and lured toward them because he "supposed they had a certain knowledge the unscathed could not guess at." Although the community has a rebbe, he doesn't, we are told,

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specialize in miracles. The Jews are there to study, uninterruptedly, in their own way. Bleilip is taken that evening to a *minyan* which the rebbe attends. After the *minyan*, during the study hour, the rebbe rises to speak. He is a man of about fifty, wearing a worker's cap; two of the fingers and all of the nails are missing from one of his hands, the result, we learn later, of a freezing experiment conducted upon him at Buchenwald. As always with Miss Ozick, the details are strong and feel true: "Bleilip reversed his view and saw that the rebbe was their child, they gazed at him with the possessiveness of faces seized by a crib, and he too spoke in that mode, as if he were addressing parents, old fathers, deferential, awed, guilty."

The rebbe speaks to the matter of the sacrificing of bullocks and goats during the days of the Temple, concluding bitterly, "For animals we in our day substitute men." Then he turns on Bleilip, questions his motives for being in the room. He, the rebbe, claims that his despair has been transferred to him from Bleilip — "Everything . . . you heard me say in a voice of despair emanates from the liver of this man." Presently he asks Bleilip to empty his pockets, and when he does so Bleilip is revealed to be carrying a toy pistol. Then, later, after the closing prayer session, the rebbe asks—demands, really—that Bleilip remove the contents of his coat pocket, which turn out to include not a toy but a real pistol. There is an exchange between the rebbe and Bleilip in which Bleilip confesses that he did once kill a pigeon with this gun and in which the rebbe remarks: "It is characteristic of believers sometimes not to believe. And it is characteristic of unbelievers sometimes to believe." Does Bleilip ever believe? " 'No,' Bleilip said; and then: 'Yes.' " " 'Then you are as bloody as anyone,' the rebbe said. . . ." and returns Bleilip's pistol to him "for whatever purpose he thought he needed it."

THROW a pebble into a pond and nine sages can't find it. Write a story such as "Bloodshed" and at least one literary critic—me—cannot figure it out. "Bloodshed" is, I realize, meant to be a wisdom story, but its wisdom eludes me. I find it baffling, but I am baffled in a half-irritated and not in a fascinated way such as would stimulate me to unravel what I find puzzling about this story. Rightly or wrongly, I feel the muddle is not mine but the author's. "Levitation," "The Pagan Rabbi," "Bloodshed"—are these examples of the new "liturgical" fiction, the new "literature attentive to the implications of Covenant and Commandment," that Cynthia Ozick has set herself to write? I must own that I, for one, find these stories willed and schematic (even where I cannot precisely figure out the scheme). Dazzling in parts, they seem extraordinary as sheer literary performance, yet, because the parts do not cohere and come alive as a whole, less than first-class as literature. Cynthia Ozick's most Jewish stories remind me in fact of the Catholic stories of Flannery O'Connor—both seem to me ambitious, impressive, yet finally, somehow, static.

I prefer Cynthia Ozick's stories written in a more realistic mode: "Envy; or, Yiddish in America," about the travail of an aging Yiddish poet desperately searching for a translator, to "Puttermesser and Xanthippe," about a middle-aged civil servant who devises a golem that brings about a temporary reform of New York City; "The Doctor's Wife," about an older physician whom everyone is trying to marry off, to "The Refugee's Notebook," about (among other things) sewing-harems on another planet. I like Miss Ozick's work least, that is to say, when she is readiest to let her imagination rip; I like it best when she brings her Jews down to earth.

Ad astra, or toward the stars, is the motto of Joseph Brill, the protagonist of *The Cannibal Galaxy*,* Cynthia Ozick's second novel and her first one in some seventeen years. A French-born Jew, a survivor who was hidden first in the basement of a convent, then in a peasant's hayloft during World War II, Brill emigrates to the American Midwest, where he founds, and is made principal of, a day school that teaches a dual curriculum, made up of equal parts of the Jewish and French traditions, which reflects his own upbringing and education. " 'My two aunties nurtured me,' he often explained, 'my Torah *Tante* and my Parisian *Tante*, each the heiress of an ancient line.' " He, Brill, has the highest standards. An astronomer by training, "he was drawn," we are told, "to heights of every kind." And: "He was maddened by genius. He respected nothing else." This Joseph Brill is the most filled-out and interesting character in all of Cynthia Ozick's fiction.

T. S. Eliot once said that the best method for being a critic is to be very intelligent, but intelligence doesn't hurt in a novelist either. *The Cannibal Galaxy* is a book brimming with intelligence, and one into which much sheer learning has been poured. Add to this a good deal of craft and a great deal —at moments perhaps too great a deal—of style. It is not, in the glib phrase of the day, "a good read"; instead it requires—and in my view largely repays—careful reading. Words are put under heavy pressure in this novel; ideas come wrapped in epigrammatic, often poetic language. Miss Ozick has mastered the manner of sliding neatly from the mundane to the grand and back again. The engines of her art here are at full throttle.

The Cannibal Galaxy is, above all, a work of style. Idiosyncratically, characters appear with "long wrists," "leathery lobes," "clever nostrils." A male teacher at Brill's school has "an altogether pretty nose conscious of its duty." One of his Parisian boyhood friends, now an aged art critic, has "a wrinkled wattle that made Brill think of an emptied-out testicle sac." Occasionally such descriptions are pushed a mite too far. Some of the mothers of Brill's students are "nervous divorcées, scratching at their little moles," when moles do not, I believe, itch. In the classroom we hear "the high and rugged beast-laugh of small children," when beasts do not, with the exception of hyenas, possess laughter. Students' opinions wind and wind, "like elongated spittle," when . . . but enough.

If Miss Ozick lapses into occasional overwriting, it is perhaps

* Knopf, 161 pp., $11.95.

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owing to the structural needs of her novel; this is a book written with great economy. In only 161 pages she provides the chronicle of a complicated man's life and the institution, his school, that will give it such meaning as it is to have. Time is handled with delicate care. Miss Ozick will linger over certain key episodes in Joseph Brill's life—his early education, his hiding out in the convent—and then let a single sentence register the passage of a decade. The overwriting is often compensated for by the elegant writing, of which there is a plenitude: " 'What is the Enlightenment?' Rabbi Pult said. 'Joseph, the Enlightenment engendered a new slogan: There is no God, and the Jews killed him. Joseph, this is the legacy of your Enlightenment.' " Always an interesting prose writer, Cynthia Ozick has become, when she is going well, a remarkable stylist, as I believe this passage about Joseph Brill's wanderings, during the day of the rounding-up of Jews in Paris, amply demonstrates:

> Sweat spilled from behind Joseph's ears down into the well of his collarbone; it was July. He hurtled himself back toward home for some clothes to take with him; then suddenly grew sane; it was folly to go back. Instead he ran, he ran nowhere; he ran. There were mobs moving toward the Seine and its bridges; he veered, and ran the other way. His throat roared with a burning; his ribs were in agony. He discovered that he was praying for his three older sisters—only what seemed to be prayer of the lung was merely panting and throat-pain. In his new sanity he admonished himself to come to a halt. His legs would not obey. Then he ordered them to show dignity, fearlessness, to slacken, to stroll, to saunter, to walk. At a cruelly casual pace, the blood gyrating in his neck, he wandered through Paris, himself its prey. . . .

THE central drama of *The Cannibal Galaxy* begins when Principal Brill, as he is known to everyone connected with his school, realizes that among his school's students is the daughter of Hester Lilt, a European writer of truly philosophical weight, a "primary thinker," who not only resembles Mme. de Sévigné, a heroine of his boyhood, but who herself, a pure intellectual, was "free of event because she was in thrall to idea." Having Beulah Lilt to educate, the daughter of a not widely recognized but nonetheless authentic powerful thinker, is the great opportunity of Principal Brill's pedagogic career. The girl, it turns out, does not test well; the psychological counselor does not view her as promising. What is more, she lives up to—or, rather, down to—these bleak estimates of her ability. She is irretrievably dull in the classroom; on the playground she slavishly follows the school's most popular girl. The girl is given every chance; radical accommodations are made to encourage her. All to no avail. Her mother takes it all calmly enough. But Principal Brill, seeing his great chance pass him by, is cast into a slough first of perplexity, then of despond.

Ad astra, seeking the heights, hoping for genius, the high road upon which Joseph Brill has set himself has seemed to lead nowhere. Cast down, Brill thinks to pull himself up by a late marriage. "I want my own son. I want someone to say kaddish for me when I die—I want to be normal," he exclaims. He marries one of the school secretaries, a rather commonplace woman much younger than he. They have a son, Naphtali by name, who early shows the greatest intellectual quickness, power, promise. Hester Lilt and her daughter return to Europe. Time passes. Eventually, Brill, now full of years, is eased out of his principalship. He retires to Florida. He becomes a television watcher, and one day, over his television screen, whose face appears but that of Beulah Lilt. The negligible little girl has grown up to become a famous Parisian painter and, more than that, a theoretician of the new avant-garde. Interviewed about her girlhood in America, she has no recollection of Principal Brill's school. Brill's own son, meanwhile, has become a business-administration major at Miami University. (Such a bright boy, one would have thought he could have got into the Wharton School.) Joseph Brill's life, in brief and in sum, is a sad and fairly complete failure.

It was Cynthia Ozick who wrote, "A story must not merely *be*, but mean." What does *The Cannibal Galaxy* mean? The title refers to "those megalosaurian colonies of primordial gases that devour smaller brother galaxies," and Brill thinks of Hester Lilt as such a cannibal galaxy. On the last page of the novel, he speaks of her having spoiled his life: "In hindsight he knew he had been ambushed by Hester Lilt." But how had she ambushed him? Is this only Brill deluding himself? Is the novel instead about the unpredictability of education? Is it saying that true ability is sometimes hidden, only to flame up later at mysterious bidding (as with Beulah Lilt), while young stars that glow brightest often fizzle out early (Naphtali majoring in business; one of the brightest girls in the school doing no better than returning to it as a teacher)? All this comes under the category of "interesting—if true." Yet its truth isn't persuasively presented in this novel. How after all did Beulah Lilt grow into this figure of radiant intellectual power? And then one wonders, why is Joseph Brill's life made to come to so little, why is this extremely intelligent and largely altruistic man brought so low? Was he insufficiently patient with Beulah Lilt? Is he to be damned for lowering his sights toward the close of his life? There is an air of unexplained vengefulness hovering over the harsh fate dealt out to Joseph Brill, and it throws this gorgeously written novel into doubt.

I SEEM to have been continually patting Cynthia Ozick on the back while slapping her in the face. But in one of her old churches, which I still attend, where they celebrate the religion of Art, we learn that only truly interesting writers are capable of greatly disappointing. I hope Cynthia Ozick will write a great many more essays, and I hope, too, she ceases to write fantastical fiction. She is a writer who only flies with her feet securely on the ground.

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Discovering the Poor

THE IDEA OF POVERTY: ENGLAND IN THE EARLY INDUSTRIAL AGE. By GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB. *Knopf. 606 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by MAURICE CRANSTON

IN THE early 18th century, philosophers wrote about wealth—Adam Smith on *The Wealth of Nations*, for example, or Rousseau on *Riches* or Voltaire on *Luxury*. Writers of the 19th century produced books about poverty. How are we to explain such a depressing change of focus? Gertrude Himmelfarb, who has established herself as our leading authority on Victorian thought with her marvelous studies of Mill, Acton, Darwin, Malthus, and other such moralists, is the one historian we might expect to know the answer, and in her latest book she tackles the problem with her customary amalgam of sympathy and skepticism, wit, patience, erudition, and a somewhat unnerving appetite for ambiguity.

Several reasons have been suggested for 19th-century England's sudden anxious awareness of poverty. One theory is that the revival of religious fervor by the Evangelical and Methodist movements sharpened the consciences of English Christians and stirred new charitable feelings toward their underprivileged neighbors. Miss Himmelfarb does not attach much credence to this conjecture, and I am sure she would be wrong to do so. If Christian sentiment had been the motive, compassion would have extended at least to the indigent of the entire United Kingdom, whereas all the evidence adduced in this book shows that concern for the poor never extended to the "half-naked savages" of Ireland, generally written off as victims of their own folly in trying to live on a one-crop diet.

Another reason suggested for the awakening of interest in poverty is the increase of population—or, more precisely, of a hungry population—in England as a result of the so-called Industrial Revolution which took place in the second half of the 18th century. One difficulty here, as Miss Himmelfarb points out, is the lack of reliable statistics. Exactly how many more people were there, and how much was their standard of living affected by the shift from agricultural to industrial life? Much can be imagined; little is actually known. Moreover, if we did have the missing demographic data, we would still need to know what was thought at the time about population changes. On this subject, Miss Himmelfarb's study sheds a great deal of light. She shows that people undoubtedly came to believe that England was rapidly becoming overcrowded.

The most notorious champion of the demographic theory of poverty was, of course, the Reverend Thomas Malthus, who darkened the scene by "raising," as Miss Himmelfarb puts it, "the specter of a population constantly at the mercy of the food supply, and condemning the poor to an eternal recurrence of 'misery and vice.'" Malthus rejected the happy 18th-century economics of Adam Smith, for whom an Invisible Hand assured that an expanding economy generated "a universal opulence which extends to the lowest ranks of society." Instead Malthus argued that any augmentation in the income of the lowest ranks would lead them to multiply their numbers at a greater rate than the increase of available provisions. Hence the relief of poverty was a doomed enterprise: the more the poor were given, the more they would breed, and scarcity would only intensify. Sexual abstinence was their one hope.

Malthus was publicly abused; but one cannot help feeling that he altered the attitude of the better-off toward the poor. The scientifically-minded came to regard them as a "surplus," who would be best advised to emigrate, while the religious-minded joined Malthus in urging the poor to stop begging and seek salvation in chastity. Both attitudes were perceived as hard-hearted even if neither was.

A third possible explanation for the 19th century's concern with poverty is that the French Revolution had frightened England's comfortable classes out of their wits, and prompted them to see the poor, no longer as less fortunate brethren, but as a separate and dangerous race of potential rioters. Miss Himmelfarb, taking a perhaps undeservedly kind view of the English, rejects this diagnosis: she suggests that the 19th-century English mind was disturbed less by fear than by "a profound sense of moral and social decay."

WHATEVER the motive, it cannot be denied that the English responded to the problem of poverty in a practical way. They introduced a new poor law which radically altered the situation of the indigent. Whether this Victorian legislation improved the situation is another question. The poor themselves seem not to have thought so, for, in an immortal phrase of Disraeli, poverty ceased to be a misfortune and became a crime. The purpose of the new poor law was to relieve the distress of those who could not help themselves, without giving any succor to able-bodied idlers of the kind who were known to have taken advantage of the old poor law. Its central feature was the workhouse, where the "really helpless," as Lord Althrop called them, could be provided with austere residential accommodation, a frugal diet, and the opportunity to engage in low-grade, low-paid labor.

Immediately the workhouse assumed in the eyes of the poor the image of a prison, a "Bastille"; the disgrace of entering such an institution haunted the imagination of

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the unfortunate, and writers such as Dickens added to the horror by depicting the conditions of workhouse life as being even worse than they actually were. "The intention," Miss Himmelfarb writes,

> had been to remove the stigma of pauperism from the poor by confining it to the pauper class. The reality turned out to be quite the reverse. A stigma so visible and obtrusive could not be so neatly contained. In spite of all the efforts to distinguish, separate, and segregate paupers and poor, the stigma attached to the one inevitably tainted the other.

The London *Times*, a robust critic of the government in those days, protested that the new poor law "amounts to a declaration that every pauper is a criminal, and that, under the name of workhouses, prisons shall be erected throughout the land for their safe custody and punishment." Far from a palliative for social unrest, the workhouse was seen by the *Times* as an incitement to republicanism, since it would alienate the poor from the political system, keep them in a state of irritation, and set an example for a sweeping departure from the ancient constitution. The *Times* kept up its campaign against the new poor law for five years, printing many sensational—or "Dickensian"—stories of the cruelties inflicted on the inmates of workhouses by their custodians. Even after the editor of the *Times* had been persuaded that some workhouses were decently run and even provided a considerable degree of "comfort," he persisted in his opposition; he argued that it was the stigma of the workhouse which constituted its cruelty, and on this point surely he was right.

It is instructive to notice that the most forceful criticisms of the Victorian poor law came less from what we should now call the Left than from the Right. The Whigs introduced the new legislation, the radicals drafted it, and most Tories supported it; but there remained a solid body of Conservative opinion which had not lost its 18th-century feeling, in Miss Himmelfarb's words, that "poverty, far from being a crime, was what it had always

Comment from Israel on JOHN LE CARRÉ's THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL

"Anyone who reads the book will have to disagree with [the] claim that it portrays Israelis as 'bad' and Palestinians as 'good'. MOSSAD agents are described as efficient enough to make the reader's head spin, idealistic and full of doubts, in the positive sense. They don't kill without compunction."
—Teddy Preuss, *Davar*

"We do not believe that the book is an anti-Israel book...The book is balanced, which pleases neither Israeli nor Arab patriots (Le Carré describes, among others, members of the PLO who are motivated by Palestinian idealism), but basically this is a novel of suspense narrated from an Israeli point of view."
—Yuval Elitsur, *Ma'ariv* Weekend Magazine

"Anyone who suspected that le Carré has written a book of anti-Zionist—or, worse, pro-PLO—propaganda, can relax. The President, Haim Herzog, who has read and praised the book was not mistaken... The MOSSAD characters [are all] heroic but modest, determined but human." —Uri Avneri, *Haolam Haze*

CBS News reports on President Herzog's reaction

"Officially, Israel doesn't even acknowledge the existence of its intelligence service, the MOSSAD, but [President] Haim Herzog, Israel's former chief of military intelligence, believes le Carré's book got it just right. 'It's more than a spy novel. First of all, it's a book written by a professional, by somebody who really understands the business of intelligence.' "

Published by Knopf

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been, a natural condition to be alleviated by the charity of those who, by the grace of God and their own efforts, were happily able to afford it, and by a public system of relief which testified to the obligations of society to care for the less fortunate." Their protest, she suggests, was not simply against the harsh treatment of paupers in workhouses; they saw as the "basic, radical inhumanity of the new law" the "ejection of the pauper from the society of his own kind . . . and from the larger society in which poor and rich were bound by human ties that could not be contracted away."

FORTUNATELY for England, Adam Smith proved in the end to have been a better economist than Malthus: with the passage of time the standard of living of working people seemed to improve as the national wealth increased. Of course, some were better off than others, but poverty came to be perceived as a relative condition, not a condition which cut its victims off from ordinary society. When Charles Booth reported in 1889 that 30.7 percent of the population of London was "poor," there was something reassuring in the very magnitude of that proportion. Booth's concept of poverty restored the poor to the dignity of belonging to the normal populace of the metropolis, and, as Miss Himmelfarb puts it, the effect of this redefinition of poverty "was profoundly moral" —it removed the stigma of pauperism. A minority of over 30 percent could hardly be thought of as criminal. Social reformers started to talk less about poverty and more about welfare. Schemes of social insurance developed around the idea of mutual aid, as opposed to institutionalized relief.

When the 20th century dawned in England, the shadow of the workhouse had receded, and the threat of state socialism, leveling incomes by means of taxation, had not yet materialized. Miss Himmelfarb, ending her book with the beginning of the Edwardian period, might well have closed on a fairly happy note. But the *belle époque* was too short-lived. The war of 1914 introduced another series of disastrous policies, and it is hardly surprising that Miss Himmelfarb should notice that the "dissatisfaction" felt by Victorians is with us still: "It has not made us better disposed to their age; neither has it made us better disposed to our own."

One of the great consolations of Victorian life must have been literature, then so fresh and so abundant, and one of the advantages of social historians of the period is that much of their material is to be found in the works of such writers as Thackeray, George Eliot, Trollope, Hardy, and Gissing. In Miss Himmelfarb's case, the literary distinction of her sources is reflected in her own fine style; she has achieved the miracle of writing, on a dismal subject, a bright and enjoyable book.

The Special Relationship

ISRAEL IN THE MIND OF AMERICA. By PETER GROSE. *Knopf. 361 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by STEVEN L. SPIEGEL

IN *Israel in the Mind of America*, Peter Grose, director of Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, has written an entertaining and engaging account of America's fascination with the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land. The book begins with the early years of European settlement on the North American continent and ends with Truman's recognition of Israel in 1948 (an epilogue takes the story to 1982). As the story unfolds, the reader is treated to an unending series of vignettes—the book is in fact more narrative than analysis. Grose's research is first-rate, and the historical nuggets he has unearthed exercise an appeal that compensates in large part for his

STEVEN L. SPIEGEL *is professor of political science at UCLA and the author of* The War for Washington: The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict, *to be published later this year by the University of Chicago Press.*

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less than scholarly procedure of citing sources.

Grose argues that from the very beginnings of colonization, the socio-religious climate of America was congenial to the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine. A restoration of the Jews had long been contemplated theologically, especially in Puritan thought, and to some degree even practically. By the 19th century, visionaries ranging from Albany's Pastor John McDonald in 1814 to Chicago's William Blackstone in 1891 gained popular support for their notions of a reborn Jewish commonwealth. Blackstone even presented a "Memorial" to President Benjamin Harrison calling for a Jewish state in Palestine and containing the signatures of 413 prominent Americans, including the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Grose does not ignore the way in which American feelings about a hypothetical Jewish restoration to Palestine were connected with American feelings toward the Jews actually living on American soil. The rights of Jews were of course guaranteed in the United States along with the rights of all other citizens. Yet there was a strain of hostility as well, represented by "the popular fear of an ineffable Jewish conspiracy at work to undermine Christian society." As Jews arrived in ever larger numbers in the middle and late 19th century, "instead of a romantic abstraction they were a reality—more often than not, a distasteful reality." The idea of their removal to Palestine could thus appeal to non-Jews on more than one level.

If the "mind" of America is one focus of Grose's narrative, the "mind" of America's Jews is another. The fledgling Jewish community in the first years of the Republic was too preoccupied with establishing itself in its new home to think seriously of a return to Zion, he writes. By the first half of the 19th century, Mordecai Manuel Noah and Rabbi Isaac Leeser did indeed envision a Jewish state, but the mainstream was more truly represented by the father of American Reform Judaism, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who declared: "The idea of the Jews returning to Palestine is no part of our creed. . . . This country is our Palestine, this city [Cincinnati] our Jerusalem, this house of God our Temple." Only when Rabbi Wise was confronted with the wave of new East European immigrants after 1881 did his own interest in Palestine awaken. (He supported a charity created to send Rumanian Jews to Palestine, "to protect us here against an immigration too large and too expensive for the common good.")

Throughout the 19th century, there was more interest among American Christians than among American Jews in a Jewish return to Palestine. But times swiftly changed. By the early 20th century Zionism had become a serious political movement, whose fortunes Grose traces by shifting his focus

Stories by Meir Blinkin

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With an introduction by Ruth R. Wisse
PROFESSOR OF YIDDISH LITERATURE, McGILL UNIVERSITY

"Of the first self-conscious 'generation' of immigrant Yiddish writers in this country, Meir Blinkin (1879-1915) arrived fully armed for a career in letters, heir to the founding fathers (Mendele Mocher Sforim, Sholem Aleichem, I.L. Peretz) who transformed the vivid, supple, expressive vernacular of the Jewish masses into a distinctive literary instrument. Come of age in Kiev, he emigrated during the pogroms early in the century and settled in the infinitely fertile territory of New York's Lower East Side, to produce the body of work here represented by 12 stories, some full-fleshed, others mere sketches. Apart from the familiar themes of the conflict between the yoke of faith and tradition and the dubious lures of secular modernity, his work is marked by an extraordinary sensitivity to women and attention to such 'forbidden' subjects as lust and adultery. Blinkin died young, his gifts unrealized and unassessable. All the same, the SUNY Press is performing a valuable service in adding this volume to its Modern Jewish Literature and Culture series.—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, 12/23/83. 176 pp. $10.95 cloth

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away from Christian thinking and onto internal developments within the Jewish community. He dwells at length on divisions among Jews —between the older and wealthier, mostly German Jews "uptown" and the newer East European immigrants "downtown"; between Zionists and their opponents; between Louis Brandeis and Chaim Weizmann, who fought over control of the Zionist movement in the U.S.; between men with contacts in high places who were prepared to rely on quiet, behind-the-scenes diplomacy and those who sought to force action by mobilizing public opinion through mass rallies, letter-writing campaigns, and similar tactics. In these debates, Grose's sympathies seem to lie with the "great men" who knew how to seek and use power—Weizmann, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Nahum Goldmann. As for the East European immigrant masses, these he tends to describe in such revealing terms as "primitive," "bearded, unwashed, strangely clothed," "unkempt."

As the focus shifts from Christian to Jewish America, Grose also begins to write more openly from a posture of sympathy with the sufferings of the Jews and toward the creation of a Jewish state. In his subsequent chapters he is devastating in his remarks about the opponents of Zionism, ridiculing James Forrestal and the King-Crane commission (a missionary attempt to undo the Jewish National Home at the Versailles peace conference after World War I). He is also blunt about anti-Semitism, particularly in dealing with the State Department's attitude toward immigration during World War II and its despicable reaction to the Holocaust. But this story has been told before, and it is unclear why so much attention should be devoted to it in a book about America and Israel, especially since at the time (as Grose stresses), most Americans viewed the fate of European Jewry as separate from the political future of Palestine.

Grose is particularly interesting in his rendition of the attitudes of Presidents Wilson, Roosevelt, and Truman toward Zionism. Although he does not say so explicitly, his narrative demonstrates that the policies of these three men were influenced more by their experience and their friendships, and also by their political views, than by any anxiety over Jewish votes. But his analysis of the actions taken by the three Presidents with regard to the future Jewish state is less than completely satisfying.

In Grose's account, Wilson comes across as vacillating and harassed. This misses the point. Wilson's secret support for the 1917 Balfour Declaration was a critical factor in its release. In taking the position he did, the President overruled his chief adviser, Colonel House, and ignored his Secretary of State, whom he knew to be vehemently opposed.

FDR's Palestine policy has been treated unfairly by some historians, according to Grose, because of the Roosevelt administration's poor record in the Holocaust. He goes to impressive lengths to prove that FDR conceived of an exclusively Jewish Palestine (with the Arabs bribed to leave) in the context of some kind of international trusteeship or regional federation with the Arab states. Even if Grose is right, however, Roosevelt simply caved in when confronted with the adamant opposition of the Saudi king at their meeting after Yalta. FDR may have had a vision but he did not have a policy, and his actions consisted primarily of making contradictory promises to both sides.

When it comes to Truman, finally, Grose's portrayal is right on the mark. The President who later received credit for assisting at the birth of Israel actually had little interest in the entire matter other than a desire to help the pathetic refugees of the Holocaust get out of the DP camps in Europe. To him the whole business was a bloody nuisance.

Grose's narrative ends properly in 1948 with Israel's declaration of independence and recognition by the Truman administration. The story he has told is so fascinating that the reader may hardly have noticed how much, on the American side, has been left out of the account of

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the 1930's and 40's. In Grose's narrative Congressmen and other politicians are bit players. Terry Duce, the outspoken representative of Aramco, the Arabian-American Oil Company, is not even mentioned. The labor unions, allies of the Zionists, are referred to only once in the entire book, in connection with Samuel Gompers's endorsement of "the principle of a Jewish homeland, as Jewish immigrants threatened to glut the American labor market"—this was *before* the Balfour Declaration. The role played by Christian Americans is particularly unclear, and inadequately developed.

The cumulative effect of these omissions is felt in the epilogue, covering the period 1948–82. According to Grose, this period was marked by a series of paradoxical changes. For one thing, "A new breed of diplomat had taken charge in the 1970's. . . . They had freed themselves from the bigotries of earlier generations." To be sure, there was anti-Semitism in American society, but it too had a new form, "no longer . . . an ideological or religious crusade but . . . an expression of social and economic frustration." As for the Jews, they had undergone a transformation as well—" 'We are all Zionists now,' said American businessmen when demonstrating their loyalty to Israel, thus dismissing half a century of anguished Jewish political debate." Yet no sooner had this come about than, in perhaps the most significant change of all, criticism of Israel began to be heard from leading Protestant clergymen, and "American liberals who had promoted the creation of Israel, Jews as well as Gentiles, began pulling back."

All these supposed changes seem confusing, even to Grose himself, in the context of what has gone before in his book. He appears surprised that there should be divisions once again among American Jews, criticism of Israel by Protestant clergymen and American liberals, continuing anti-Semitism. Yet this is simply a consequence of his having concentrated too heavily, in the later stages of his book, on diplomats and Presidents, while scanting the pieces of the American mosaic that now suddenly reappear in the epilogue.

Israel in the Mind of America prompts a number of observations about the America-Israel relation today.

First, there is the bitterness toward Israel undeniably felt in many circles. As Grose shows, the promise of a "restoration of the Jews" always "contained the seeds of disillusionment." America has supported the birth of dozens of nations since World War II, but only one was supposed to be the embodiment of the Bible. No ideal by definition can ever measure up to reality. Grose laments that Jews have captured the imagination of the Gentile world "as soldiers and not as dreamers," but no modern

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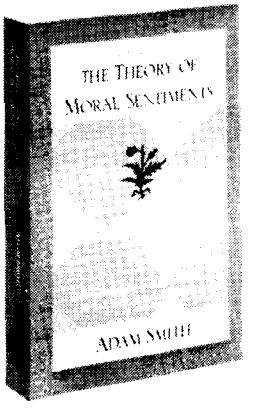

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state can be a nation of dreamers, especially if it is surrounded by hostile forces.

Second, and intimately related, is the temptation to exert disproportionate pressure on Israel. Idealism turns quickly to paternalism—any father "present at the creation" is bound to resent the independence of his progeny. One inevitable result has been the syndrome which goes under the name of "saving Israel in spite of herself."

Third is the persistent tendency to concentrate on Israel as *the* "problem" in the Middle East—another direct legacy of romantic visions of the Holy Land. Unlike in the earlier periods Grose describes, the United States today is the primary power in the Middle East, and the region is itself of much higher priority to American interests than ever before. Yet, although Israel is peripheral or irrelevant to most of the conflicts in the area, many American officials persist in believing that Israel alone —the land to which so many historic passions are connected—must possess the solution to the region's woes.

Grose writes: "Even as they go their own way, in pursuit of their own national interests, Americans and Israelis are bonded together like no two other sovereign peoples." It is ironic that a book which sets out to explain the origins of the "special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel should end by helping to explain the reasons for the ongoing tensions between them.

Invisible Statecraft

KGB TODAY: THE HIDDEN HAND. By JOHN BARRON. *Reader's Digest Press. 489 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN

JOHN BARRON'S *KGB Today*, which draws on a wealth of new data and is written with a conceptual clarity rarely found in books about espionage, is indispensable to an understanding of the recent activities of Soviet intelligence. Unlike his 1974 book (*KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents*), which tended to depict KGB officers as thugs and incompetents, and therefore focused on their failures, Barron concentrates in this book on the KGB's successes. Aside from revealing a number of Soviet espionage operations, such as the recruitment and maneuvering of spies in the U.S. defense establishment, *KGB Today* provides an unparalleled insight into the covert foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

Barron's most dramatic coup proceeds from exclusive interviews with a KGB defector named Stanislav Aleksandrovich Levchenko. Major Levchenko, who, before defecting in 1979, had been responsible for developing both conventional intelligence sources and agents of influence in Tokyo for the KGB, met with Barron in Hawaii with the evident approval of the CIA. Among the disclosures he made were the names of at least a dozen Japanese agents and sources recruited over the past decade. He also provided considerable detail about the tactics and disinformation line of these KGB operations, which all turned on the common objective of disturbing the alliance between the United States and Japan. The Levchenko revelations generated an unprecedented scandal in Japan when published last year.

After establishing the modus operandi of a KGB station, Barron moves on to Europe and provides a coherent picture of the way in which the agency orchestrates a campaign of "active measures"—the rubric under which are subsumed all non-intelligence-gathering activities of the Soviet clandestine services—to achieve covertly the ends of Soviet foreign policy. He effectively demonstrates that the Soviet objective in Europe in the late 1970's was (and still is) obstructing or delaying the deployment of new generations of NATO weapons, especially the more accurate Pershing-2 missiles. To help realize this policy, the KGB employed a wide range of active measures—including forged documents, inspired rumors, planted news stories, and provocations by well-placed agents of influence to manipulate mass demonstrations and anti-nuclear groups. While the KGB did not control most of the targeted organizations in any hierarchical sense, and the concerns of most of the participants were no doubt sincere, it still managed through these covert operations to redirect their energies—and fears—away from the issue of Soviet weapons deployments to that of Western counterdeployments. Barron argues that this campaign of active measures brought sufficient pressures on NATO governments to raise substantially the political cost of defense; in this sense it was successful.

Finally, using cooperative sources in the FBI, Barron updates the continuing spy war. He reconstructs in great detail the cases of recent KGB spies, like Hugh George Hambleton, Rudolf Herrmann, and William Holden Bell, who caused only a momentary blur in the newspapers when they were arrested in the late 1970's, explaining their motives and describing their recruitment, their targets, their craft, and the context in which they operated. In the course of discussing the countermeasures to this espionage, he also reveals that the CIA at least temporarily penetrated Soviet intelligence with two moles. The first, Arkady Shevchenko, defected to the United States in 1977, but it was not known until this book that he had spied for the United States since 1974. The second mole, Aleksandr Dmitrevich Ogorodnik, an officer stationed at the Soviet embassy in Colombia, who supplied the CIA with microfilmed reports from 1974 to 1977, committed suicide after his espionage was uncovered by the KGB.

LIKE Barron's previous books, *KGB Today* is precisely documented with source notes. It also includes two extraordinary appendices. The first, apparently drawn from a CIA computerized printout, is a listing of some 200 Soviet diplomatic officials expelled or withdrawn from foreign countries between 1974 and 1983 because of their involvement in espionage. The second appendix, presumably reflecting the current CIA state of

EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN, *whose books include* The Rise and Fall of Diamonds *and* Between Fact and Fiction, *is currently completing a book on international deception.*

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knowledge, gives a completely revised organizational description of the KGB's foreign-intelligence apparatus, the so-called First Chief Directorate, which differs markedly from early versions drawn from defecting Soviet intelligence officers in the 1960's. Indeed, when one compares the two versions of the KGB, it appears to be two completely different organizations. Either its order of battle changed drastically or the CIA may have been the victim of serious misinformation.

Although the material in the book, much of which cannot be found in any other published form, is essential for any serious analysis of Sovet covert activities by journalists and scholars, it has received surprisingly little attention to date. (It has not been reviewed, for example, by the New York *Times*, the Washington *Post*, or the *Wall Street Journal*.) Journalism, to be sure, traditionally reports the most evident causes of change, and this focus often leads to the neglect of the less visible activities of intelligence services. Yet intelligence services do enagage in a subterranean battle to change political outcomes —the CIA terms this "covert action" rather than "active measures." *KGB Today* is an important step toward understanding this invisible level of statecraft.

Faith Without Faith

THE POLITICS AT GOD'S FUNERAL: THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION. By MICHAEL HARRINGTON. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 308 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by
WERNER J. DANNHAUSER

IN THIS book, Michael Harrington "cries wolf," as he puts it, in order to warn us all of the potentially catastrophic consequences of the death of God, the "societal God of the Judeo-Christian West." As human beings have come to realize that no Supreme Power rules "out there," they have lost their sense of life's meaning. The force that once legitimized standards, prescribed behavior, sanctified causes, and generally gave life its flavor—that force has disappeared and humankind knows dread.

Harrington's own self-professed atheism does not disqualify him for the role of Cassandra. After all, Nietzsche, the thinker who most prominently proclaimed that "God is dead," was himself hardly a believer, and Harrington thus finds himself in good, or at least profound, company. He does, to be sure, run the risk of telling a very old tale; one might wonder what remains to be said about the Deity's alleged demise. Harrington, however, can legitimately claim to bring an unusual perspective to bear on the subject.

His approach compels some interest and attention because Harrington, at present the co-chairman of the Democratic Socialists of America, proudly professes to be a Marxist; a number of previous works of his have attested to the strength of his ideological commitment. Now Marxists are better known for celebrating than for mourning the death of God. Marx understood the decline of religion as one of the preconditions and signs of human liberation. His collaborator Engels found even agnosticism unacceptable, a kind of cowardice.

Harrington differs from his intellectual mentors, having learned that man cannot live by dialectical materialism alone. Acknowledging his Catholic heritage and upbringing, he considers himself "religiously musical." He dedicates himself to deepening the insights of socialism, to providing it, as it were, with a tragic dimension, and to elaborating a Left humanism. These intentions have resulted in an attempt to articulate "the spiritual crisis of Western civilization" both chronologically, as a history of ideas, and according to subject matter, as a survey of fields like sociology, economics, and theology. This double aspect makes for some repetitiveness, but the two strands can be separated for the sake of analysis.

WERNER J. DANNHAUSER *is professor of government at Cornell and the author of* Nietzsche's View of Socrates.

Is there any hope for the Middle East?

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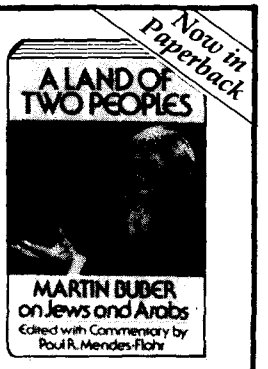

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Surprisingly enough, Harrington's history of unbelief begins with the devout Pascal rather than, say, the biblical fool who said in his heart that there was no God. Pascal was "the first to realize that God was dying" when he faced up to the infinite and chaotic universe depicted by the new science of the 17th century. (Nothing is said of Pascal's abiding belief in Divine Revelation.) Thereafter, surprises cease as Harrington touches all the expected bases. We read of Kant's assault on objective truth and his enshrinement of human subjectivity; of Hegel's grand or grandiose humanism which secularized Christianity almost beyond recognition; and of Marx's consummation of this line of thought. Marx saw religion as alienation: men had created God but thought that God created men; the revolution would bring about a time that had no need for such hallucinations. Harrington's account also features the usual supporting cast: Voltaire, Schleiermacher, Goethe, and others. Nietzsche, as usual, plays the outsider, because he disbelieved in progress and therefore propounded a "catastrophic atheism."

Harrington's narrative account avoids subtlety but does not escape confusion. One never quite knows whether he thinks God died a natural death or was murdered. If He was murdered, who did it? Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche are the leading suspects, but suspicion also falls on impersonal powers like science, history, and freedom. Nor is it all that clear that He is really dead. Thus one first learns that Kant "killed God" in the 18th century, only to discover that in 1898, "God was dying, but slowly." Harrington takes insufficient care to block his Nietzschean metaphor, and therefore spreads bewilderment.

His survey of modern disciplines and institutions is clear enough, however. For example, Harrington persuasively shows capitalism's tendency to secularize the world. He justly criticizes the attempts of sociologists to validate religion on the mere grounds that religiosity seems to appear everywhere and always. At his best, he is a summarizer of considerable talent. His discussion of 20th-century theology not only does justice to Karl Barth, but also shows him to be outside the mainstream of modern Protestant thinking, which seems, wittingly or unwittingly, to be preoccupied with "providing a Christian burial for the dead God."

When dealing with such matters, Harrington usually keeps his Marxist predilections within reasonable bounds, though they are evident enough, as in his reluctance to assign any role to chance in history. Marxists are famous for saying "it is no accident," and Harrington actually does say this a number of times. Things never seem just to happen; they happen "not so incidentally." Moreover, Harrington assumes as a matter of course that human thought is influenced decisively by the historical setting in which it appears.

IN GENERAL, though, the many faults of *The Politics at God's Funeral* have little to do with Marxism, which in any event has enough sins on its head without having to be blamed for Harrington's astonishing sloppiness. In dealing with German, he has an *Umlaut* problem; when he translates from that language he sometimes mistranslates; he gets even the titles of books wrong; and he has not mastered the spelling of the name of Seymour Martin Lipset. If it is true that the Lord God resides in the minute detail, then Harrington's way with details almost by itself amounts to a proof of God's death.

Even if one manages to overlook Harrington's carelessness, one still is faced with the obstacle of his trendiness, most prominently exemplified by his slavish concessions to radical feminism. It might be thought obvious to refer to God as masculine, but on the very first page of the very first chapter the author sees fit to apologize, in a long footnote, for this usage. Thereafter he takes care to sanitize his language in all the expected ways; God is not a spokesman but a spokesperson. It almost goes without saying that the book also includes salutary condemnations of racism as well as ethnocentrism, and that Harrington makes it clear that he worries about the environment.

Both carelessness and an excessive concern with being fashionable would be easy to forgive if the book had much to say that was new or true or both, but such proves not to be the case. Sheer conventionality constitutes its most glaring defect. Harrington's scholarship breaks no new ground, notwithstanding the fact that he has included no fewer than sixteen appendices, a bibliography of hundreds of entries, almost thirty pages of notes, and a most respectable index. The scholarly apparatus becomes merely pretentious when one realizes the derivativeness of the author's views (though he is generous in acknowledging his debts).

Harrington's intellectual fatigue manifests itself all along but reaches its climax in the book's final chapter, bombastically entitled "Prolegomena to a Political Morality." He has previously called for "a united front of believers and atheists in search of a common transcendental which is neither supernatural nor anti-supernatural." Now he seeks to provide some guidance for men as they seek to "create . . . common values" or forge a "consensus ideology."

Were Harrington more open to the possibility that Nietzsche was right, he would comprehend the futility of his own quest, which takes God's death for granted. First of all, Nietzsche showed poignantly that values that can be *created* are not really values. They do not readily yield meaning, since what is meant by "meaning" is something beyond our power to make. Then, too, Nietzsche declared that the death of God was tantamount to the death of *all* gods. Harrington divines as much when he writes that "the death of God has indeed pointed toward the death of all the higher values," but he seems both unwilling and unable to follow Nietzsche to the depth of the latter's thought.

He pays a heavy price for that failure. Impelled to come to the defense "of the very existence of values," he nevertheless finds himself unable to provide a ground for them. Hence his conclusion amounts to little more than the socialist equivalent of a formulaic praise of motherhood. Harrington assuredly no longer believes in God,

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and he has found no substitute standard to which he can appeal. Nature has nothing to say to him and he has lost the innocence of a Hegelian-Marxist belief in history.

Where did Harrington go wrong? Perhaps the various credos of modernity caused him to surrender his belief in God too readily, too dogmatically. Nothing he understands could not be equally well understood, or better, by a believer who continues to have faith that God exists, inscrutable as always and mostly silent now. Such a believer might even be saved from some of the tired pieties that Michael Harrington has come to utter.

Paradise Now

THE COERCIVE UTOPIANS: SOCIAL DECEPTION BY AMERICA'S POWER PLAYERS. By RAEL JEAN ISAAC and ERICH ISAAC. *Regnery. 325 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT NISBET

WHO are the coercive utopians? According to Rael Jean and Erich Isaac in this valuable book, they are the people in present-day America who hold the view that man is by nature both innocent and perfectible; that man's innate decency is tormented by the forces of industry, technology, and the needs of national defense; and that therefore extraordinary, even coercive, tactics are required for his redemption.

As prime examples of the coercive utopians, the Isaacs adduce the following: those elements in the hierarchy of the World and National Council of Churches who, against the views of the vast majority of members of these churches, do not hesitate to make financial and other donations to "the Palestine Liberation Organization, the governments of Cuba and Vietnam, the pro-Soviet totalitarian movements in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and several violence-prone fringe groups in this country"; those environmentalists whose belief in the myth of a once immaculate continent leads them to assail the industrial and technological systems which over the past two centuries have made the American standard of living, and also of international generosity, one of the wonders of history; those "counterfeit peacemakers" who, indifferent to the threat posed by the Soviet Union, press upon the United States a nuclear freeze, one that could not but greatly erode the pattern of deterrence that has thus far protected the world from nuclear catastrophe; those members and camp followers of left-wing groups that posit honor and decency and incorruptibility in the Marxist sectors of the Third World, but hardly ever in the United States; finally, those who,

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This "may well be the most important book ever written about U.S.-Israel relations, and certainly the most disturbing.

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"**I strongly commend the book** to all Americans and particularly to those political leaders courageous enough to try to redefine United States relations with Israel in mutually self-respecting terms." —**GEORGE W. BALL,** Undersecretary of State, 1961-1966; author of *The Discipline of Power*

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shrinking from overtly revolutionary careers, enter schools of journalism, law, and theology to pursue through these professions the weakening of bourgeois democracy.

The Coercive Utopians is a compact and readable account of the influence exerted upon major institutions in America by this entire array of left-leaning bureaucrats, lawyers, theologians, journalists, professors, and the like. The reseach that underlies the book is impressive, and is distinguished by an eye for trenchant detail and for diversity of evidence.

THE authors properly devote a good deal of attention to the environmentalist movement. They certainly do not fault the great majority of Americans who happen to believe in preserving parts of the wilderness for human recreation, or in making our air, water, and earth as free from pollutants as possible. But they do show how highly ideological and generally leftist intellectuals have assumed dominant positions in the environmentalist movement and helped lead it toward increasingly activist politics. The history of the Sierra Club in California epitomizes this effort at a gradual radicalization of goals and tactics.

As the Isaacs point out, this development began shortly after World War II. But it was not until the late 1960's, when the New Left made its way to some of the environmental organizations, including old and long-respected ones, that the nature of environmentalist action changed markedly. In retrospect it is easy to see why the New Left should have flocked to environmentalism just at that moment, when the revolution it had initiated on university campuses had finally come to seem doomed. Environmentalism had a respectability that went back to Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot at the turn of the century. Few if any sane Americans *exulted* in spoliation of the environment; to the contrary, polls gave evidence of the high priority (among the relatively well-off middle and upper classes, at any rate) placed on a clean environment. In short, environmentalism enjoyed a nearly universal acceptance that many social-reform causes lacked, and that the New Left on campus had forfeited by its nihilism and its espousal of violence.

To the new breed of militant political activists, the achievement of environmentalist goals promised a benefit unseen by their tens of millions of sympathizers—namely, a degree of social reconstruction as radical as any dreamed of by old-fashioned socialists. How better to carry on the old war against capitalism, free private enterprise, private property, and bourgeois democracy than to press, under the name of a pollution-free environment, for massive regulatory measures that would amount in the end to a thorough transformation of economy, society, and government?

There is an aspect of today's environmentalism which the Isaacs do not significantly touch upon but which gives it, I believe, an importance lacking in other contemporary movements. Friedrich Engels, in his essay, "On the Early History of Christianity," noted the power of that religion in its infancy to attract a variety of crackpots and quacks who found it to be a kind of umbrella for their own interests, no matter how far these may have been from the primitive Christian gospel. Engels likened the socialism of his own day to early Christianity in this respect. Almost without number, he wrote, were the nature healers, advocates of free love, anti-vivisectionists, vegetarians, anti-inoculationists, and others who were already seeking to hitch their causes to the great movement of the century, namely, the movement of the working class. A similar point can be made, I believe, about the environmentalist movement today.

IN A thoughtful chapter near the end of this book, the Isaacs, summarizing their research findings in a variety of areas, note the psychological or intellectual affinities that bind together Third World enthusiasts, militant environmentalists, nuclear-freeze fanatics, and the like. What makes of these diverse people a veritable class? The Isaacs are well aware of the truth stated by Joseph Schumpeter that a constantly rising number of intellectuals will become enemies of the capitalist system not despite but because of the prosperity and honor heaped upon them by the system. In part this hatred of capitalism can be explained by two ancient principles derived from the study of human behavior: the principles of rising expectations and relative deprivation. To these factors I would add two more.

The first has to do with the boredom that tends to infect those who live by their brains or at least by their wits. The second is the continuing power of what Richard Hofstadter called the paranoid tradition in American history. The old place of the Know-Nothings, the demonologists engrossed by thoughts of conspiracies led by the Pope and/or the Elders of Zion, the free-silver fanatics, the anti-evolutionists, and many others, has in substantial measure been taken—albeit with greater sophistication—by the kinds of people treated in this book.

Still, just as organized paranoids of the past have generally been dispelled by time and an increasingly informed public, so, it is possible to hope, will our current crop. The 1980's are already a very different decade from their immediate predecessors, and it has not proved so easy—to take just one example—for the hierarchy of the World and National Council of Churches to continue scattering aid to guerrillas and terrorists. This is not to underestimate the continuing influence of the utopians and demonologists, the "honest fools and dishonest promoters" (in Engels's phrase), especially in the environmentalist movement. But there *have* been successes in "stemming the utopian tide," to cite the title of the Isaacs' final chapter, and these offer deeper grounds for optimism than some of us would have thought possible two decades ago. *The Coercive Utopians* is bound to play a significant role of its own in further fortifying this sense of hope.

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